

STYLE GROUPS

Iconography, and to a certain extent material, technique, and characteristics of the shape allow the division of the prisms into various groups which can in certain cases be connected with specific regions of Crete. Often, the prisms of each group are part of a greater assemblage of seals which show similar characteristics. Discussed below are the various groups of prisms: the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms, the Prisms with EM III/MM I Influences, the Mesara Chlorite Prisms, the Dawkins Prism, the Phaistos Agrimi Prism, the British Museum Prisms, the Platanos Prism with the Cable Devices, the Kalo Chorio and Psychro Prisms with the Cable Devices, the Platanos Ornamental Prism, and the Central Crete Ornamental Prisms. Seals of other forms which belong with them are also taken into consideration.

MALIA/EASTERN CRETE STEATITE PRISMS

92 % of the existing material belongs to this group, including all but one of the prisms recovered at the Malia Workshop (*fig. 18*).³⁴⁸ The majority of examples are cut in steatite. Occasionally, other soft stones/minerals, such as sepiolite, and medium-hard stones are used.³⁴⁹ Most often, the seal faces are ellipsoidal or compressed ellipsoidal, but round and rectangular faces are also met (*fig. 18*, ellipsoidal/compressed ellipsoidal: *a, b, d, f, h-x*; round/rectangular: *c, e, g*). Many of the ellipsoidal and some of the compressed ellipsoidal and rectangular seal faces are elongated (*fig. 18 l-n, p, w, x*). Grooves around the faces are common.

Most of the devices are engraved freehand. Often, vertical pressure drills are used for the creation of 'cup sinkings' or occasionally, centred-circles (*fig. 18 a, j, u, v*). Deep intaglios with flat board-like interiors and vertical or slanting outline walls which often penetrate the stone deeper than the interiors are common and are often seen as characteristic of the group

³⁴⁸ 1-6, 8-15, 16 (?), 17-20, 22, 24-27, 29, 30, 32, 33-44, 46-55, 58, 59, 61, 63-82, 84-97, 99, 100, 108-111, 113-120, 122-132, 134-159, 161-215, 218-224, 226-251, 253-257, 260-275, 277-289, 291-301, 304-319, 321-327, 329-332, 333 (?), 334, 335, 338-340, 342-356, 360-363, 365-367, 369-387, 389-394, 396, 397, 400-408, 410-430, 431-438, 439 (?), 440, 441, 443-449, 450, 451-455, 456-481, 482 (?), 483-502, 504-548, 549 (?), 550-591, 593-595, 597-601, 603, 605, A.1, A.3, A.4, A.6, A.7 (?), A.8, A.9, A.11-A.21. The group coincides partly with Yule's Malia Workshop Complex (Yule 1980 a, 212-213) and Poursat's - Papatsarouha's Style de Malia (Poursat - Papatsarouha 2000, 257-261). Some pieces included in the group are handled by Yule in his Hieroglyphic Deposit Group (Yule 1980 a, 215-219). 160 which comes from the Malia Workshop is categorised with the Prisms with EM III/MM I Influences.

³⁴⁹ Sepiolite: e.g. 523. Medium-hard stones: e.g. 282, 577.

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a. 579 c (XI 298 c)



b. 5 b (V Suppl. 1A 43 b)



c. 498 a (VI 34 a)



d. 147 b (II,2 102 b)



e. 118 b (II,2 225 b)



f. 81 c (II,2 214 c)



g. 269 c (III 177 c)



h. 283 a (III 179 a)



i. 154 a (II,2 111 a)



j. 307 c (III 221 c)



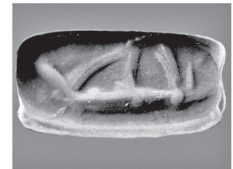
k. 492 b (VI 52 b)



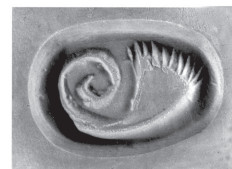
l. 450 b (XII 48 b)



m. 198 b (II,2 174 b)



n. 577 a (V Suppl. 3 356 a)



o. 539 b (IX 18 b)



p. 319 a (III 196 a)



q. 318 b (III 195 b)



r. 110 c (II,2 272 c)



s. 511 c (VI 32 c)



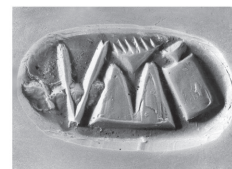
t. 158 b (II,2 116 b)



u. 199 c (II,2 175 c)



v. 16 a (I 426 a)



w. 3 b (V 25 b)



x. 30 a (XI 11 a)

Fig. 18 Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.

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(fig. 18 d, i, m, o, p, w). Occasionally, the intaglios are smoothed out by further chafing or are created only by chafing such that they acquire more or less regular U-shaped profiles (fig. 18 g, n). Intaglios created by the joint of two slanting cuts met in such a way that a line with a variously wide V-profile is created are also common (fig. 18 e, k, l). Frequent are motifs composed of ‘cup sinkings’ linked by elements created by freehand paring out of the stone (fig. 18 a, u).³⁵⁰

The representational element predominates. Humans, animals, parts of humans or animals, fictional creatures, plants, as well as various objects and constructions constitute the representational repertoire (fig. 18 a–n). Flowers, leaves, blossoms, and various toothed motifs which resemble branches³⁵¹ are some of the commonest floral devices (fig. 18 i, o, p). Lines, blobs, triangles, crosses, stars, whirls, swastikas, and spirals are common ornamental motifs (fig. 18 m, q–x).

Representational composites, repetition compounds, supplementation compounds, and border compounds are frequently met (fig. 18 l, q, s, u). Among the repetition compounds, especially favoured are radiating or rotating patterns composed of representational or floral devices and patterns composed of parts of representational devices (fig. 18 s).³⁵² Motifs which function as signs of the hieroglyphic script are also met (fig. 18 w, x).

When centred-circles are met, they are either integrated in representational or ornamental devices which are otherwise cut with the blade³⁵³ or are composed with each other in repetition compounds such as *Cross patterns* and *Rows* (fig. 18 j, v).³⁵⁴ In this latter case, they are often combined on the seal face with other devices which are cut freehand (fig. 18 v).³⁵⁵ Both or at least one of the other sides of the seals on which centred-circles are met are cut freehand and show devices other than ones composed of lines, blobs, and centred-circles.³⁵⁶ On these seals, lines are very rarely created by filing.³⁵⁷

The images can be composed of single devices or, most often, by combinations of more than one device. The devices are combined with each other paratactically or along the lines of rotational or reflection symmetry (fig. 18 a, c, f, l, m, p, x). The strategies of flanking and angle/curve-filling are also commonly used (fig. 18 i).³⁵⁸ Fillers, and especially lines and triangles are very popular (fig. 18 d, m, w, x).

³⁵⁰ See also 579 c.

³⁵¹ For the most common of these motifs, see “*Saw branch*”, ‘*Fir branch*’, ‘*Fern branch*’, ‘*Centipede branch*’.

³⁵² For further examples of such repetition compounds, see 82 b, 91 c, 182 c, 226 b, 270 a, 361 a, 446 b, 497 c, 505 b, 529 a, 564 c, 567 a, 575 b.

³⁵³ E.g. 92 a, 288 b, 307 c, 468 a, 569 c, 586 a, 586 b. The arms of the device on 363 c are cut freehand whereas the ‘cup sinkings’ are, as the centred-circle, vertically drilled.

³⁵⁴ E.g. 16 a, 333 b, 380 a, 392 b, 572 a. Centred-circles are encountered on the following prisms of the group: 16, 92, 100, 288, 307, 333, 363, 380, 382, 392, 468, 569, 586.

³⁵⁵ See also 392 b.

³⁵⁶ Two sides of 100 and 333 are engraved in the vertical pressure technique. 586 shows centred-circles on two sides, but these are in both cases combined with elements which are engraved freehand.

³⁵⁷ Only on 333 b, 333 c.

³⁵⁸ E.g. 215 c.

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Descriptive, ‘descriptive with symbol’,³⁵⁹ ‘pictographic’, and ornamental images as well as hieroglyphic inscriptions are encountered (*fig. 18*, descriptive: *a, g, h*; ‘pictographic’: *f, l*; ornamental: *o–v*; inscriptions: *w, x*). Of these, descriptive images are the most common, making up 55.6 % of the representations whose nature can be identified. Of the remaining, 33.9 % are ornamental images, 6.6 % are ‘pictographic’ images, and 3.9 % are hieroglyphic inscriptions.³⁶⁰ Among the descriptive images, not only still but also narrative images are met, such as animal attacks or suckling scenes (*fig. 18 h*). ‘Pictographic’ images and hieroglyphic inscriptions are characteristic of the group and, with one exception, are not met in connection with any other prisms.³⁶¹

THE PRISMS AS CARRIERS OF SCRIPT

In the motifs of the steatite prisms which he does not identify as script Evans sees ‘pictographic designs’ which reproduce information regarding their owners and further speaks of a linear transgression from such devices to hieroglyphic signs of a fully developed script.³⁶² In the seals which bear hieroglyphic inscriptions, he sees two grades of development, one represented by those of class A whose inscriptions represent an archaic form and one evident on those of class B which show script of a fully developed form. Soft stone seals and predominantly prisms are associated with class A. The inscriptions are simple and, when met on prisms, they often adorn only one seal face, the other sides bearing ‘pictographic designs’. With class B are associated hard stone seals. In them, is represented the fully developed script which shows more elaborate images and longer inscriptions. When script is found on three-sided prisms and four-sided prisms, most or all of the seal faces bear inscriptions. ‘Pictographic designs’ of the type found on the previous class are not met.

More recent research has shown that the inscriptions on soft and hard stone seals constitute part of one system of writing on which archaic and more developed forms cannot be distinguished.³⁶³ The distinction noted by Evans is based on stylistic considerations³⁶⁴ and represents an actual difference in technique, style, and the role played by hieroglyphs on soft and hard stone seals.

By encompassing soft stone seals which show hieroglyphs, Evans’s class A includes most inscribed Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms. Despite the fact that among soft stone seals, prisms of this group are the commonest bearers of inscriptions, only 7 % of them and,

³⁵⁹ E.g. **113 a**.

³⁶⁰ The nature of 13.8 % of the images met on this group cannot be identified.

³⁶¹ The exception is **336 b**. For this image, see p. 125.

³⁶² Evans 1909, 130–144.

³⁶³ For a corpus of the inscriptions of the Cretan hieroglyphic script, see CHIC.

³⁶⁴ Already noted by Sbonias and Karnava (Sbonias 1995, 108; Karnava 2000, 196). Yule followed Evans in the distinction of two forms of the hieroglyphic script (Yule 1980, 169–171).

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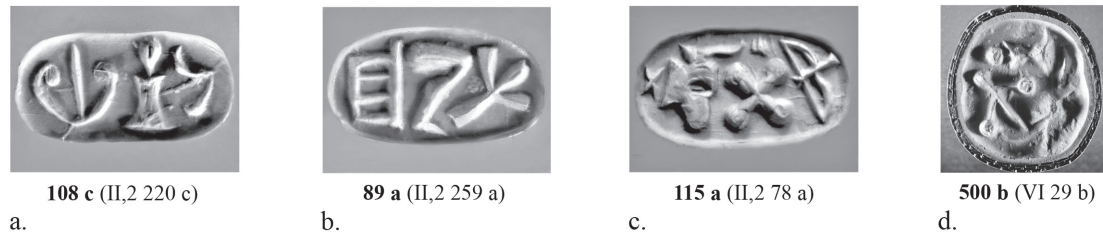


Fig. 19 Hieroglyphic inscriptions met on Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.

as already noted, 3.9 % of their seal faces are inscribed.³⁶⁵ As Evans remarks, inscriptions are most commonly met on elongated seal faces which are suitable for bearing script.³⁶⁶ On most occasions, they are found on one seal face, the others bearing images of different nature.³⁶⁷ Only 17 % of the inscribed prisms show hieroglyphic inscriptions on two seal faces and 7 % on all three seal faces.³⁶⁸

As a rule, the inscriptions consist of two or three signs which are at times combined with fillers, such as lines, spirals, triangles, and perhaps various floral motifs (*fig. 19*).³⁶⁹ The elaboration of the signs which is characteristic of hard stone seals is not present. Of special interest is the prevalence of one sign group,³⁷⁰ i.e. the CHIC signs 044 – 049, and the fact that apart from this, only three further sign combinations are met more than two times (*fig. 19 a*).³⁷¹ The prevailing sign group is most common on those prisms which are

³⁶⁵ The prisms which bear hieroglyphic inscriptions are **3, 29, 30, 32, 35, 53, 69, 89, 99, 108, 115, 132, 148, 158, 251, 279, 291, 327, 353, 379, 422, 434, 438, 445, 457, 468, 477, 483, 384, 500, 518, 519, 525, 552, 561, 580**. Also perhaps **75, 128, 538, 543**. The CHIC is followed as the authority by which motif combinations are interpreted as hieroglyphic inscriptions. However, despite their exclusion from the CHIC, the combinations **75 a, 75 c, 128 b, 538 c**, and **543 c** have also been counted as hieroglyphic inscriptions (for these combinations, see also footnote 2088). Also Karnava and Jasink see as hieroglyphic inscriptions more motif combinations than the CHIC. For more on this subject, see footnote 2087.

³⁶⁶ Evans 1909, 134. But not always, e.g. the inscriptions **500 b** and **538 c** (?) which are engraved on short ellipsoidal seal faces.

³⁶⁷ Also in Evans 1909, 134–135.

³⁶⁸ On two seal faces: **35, 75** (?), **89, 422, 434, 477, 525**. On three seal faces: **69, 353, 457, 519** is a peculiar case as, according to the CHIC and Jasink, the inscriptions on it are composed from the combination of the hieroglyphs of each two sides (CHIC no. 259; Jasink 2009, 114, 117, 128, 130, 156). Because of this peculiarity and the reservations of the present author regarding the identification of the device **519 a** as the CHIC sign 049, the seal is not included in the number of prisms which show inscriptions on three faces. For the reservations of the author regarding the identification of the device **519 a** as a hieroglyph, see footnote 1667. See Karnava 2000, 192, for the percentages of hieroglyphic three-sided prisms (both hard and soft stone ones) in which all three sides or less than three sides exhibit hieroglyphic inscriptions.

³⁶⁹ Jasink sees floral motifs as part of the inscription and not as fillers (Jasink 2009, 13–21, 127–128, 138).

³⁷⁰ For the term *sign group*, see Karnava 2000, 195.

³⁷¹ CHIC signs 010 – 038, CHIC signs 057 – 034 – 056, CHIC signs 044 – 005. For this subject, see pp. 345–346,

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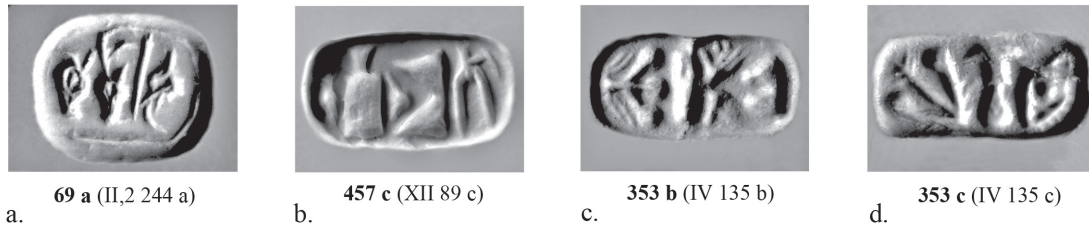


Fig. 20 Hieroglyphic inscriptions on Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms which show elements which bring them close to hard stone hieroglyphic seals.

inscribed on one side only and is the only combination met on the prisms recovered at the Malia Workshop.³⁷²

The relatively small number of hieroglyphic inscriptions, the fact that in most cases, each piece bears one inscription, the prevalence of one sign group, the small number of signs combined on the inscriptions, and the lack of elaboration set these prisms apart from the hard stone hieroglyphic seals.³⁷³ A much greater acquaintance with the hieroglyphic script is shown by the significantly larger number of different inscriptions in hard stone seals, the common combination of three or four signs, the elaboration of script signs and fillers, and the fact that multi-faced hard stone seals are for the most part inscribed on all their faces.³⁷⁴

Three prisms stand out among the rest on the strength of the fact that they display somewhat more complex inscriptions on all their three sides (*fig. 20*).³⁷⁵ Typical of this group is the fact that they include combinations of three signs while one inscription is put together of four signs (*fig. 20 a*). The quality of the workmanship of two of these pieces, which are cut on medium-hard stone, is very high (*fig. 20 b–d*). Great care has been taken in the execution of the intaglios which, at first glance, create the impression of

355. For the possible significance of the sign group CHIC signs 044 – 049, see footnote 2091.

³⁷² However, the existence of a different hieroglyphic inscription on side a of the breccia three-sided prism CMS II,2 no. 168 which also comes from the workshop suggests that its hieroglyphic repertoire was not restricted to this combination. Steatite seals with different hieroglyphic inscriptions have been recovered from other places in Malia and the Quartier Mu (e.g. **115 a**; Detournay – Poursat – Vandenebeele 1980, 171–175 nos. 241–243).

³⁷³ For the hieroglyphic seals in general, see Krzyszkowska 2005, 95–98. The term *hieroglyphic seal* refers to ‘any seal bearing at least one Hieroglyphic inscription’ (Karnava 2000, 161).

³⁷⁴ For some examples of hard stone hieroglyphic seals, see CMS II,2 nos. 256, 316; CMS III no. 229; CMS VI nos. 91, 93; CMS XII nos. 105, 106, 110, 10D. For the possible reasons for the connection of hard stone seals with more elaborated hieroglyphic inscriptions, see Poursat 2000, especially 189, 190; Karnava 2000, 192–194; also this current work, pp. 357–358). For a further comparison of the iconography of the soft stone prisms to that of hard stone seals, see the section ‘Images exclusive to soft stone glyptic’, pp. 356–358.

³⁷⁵ **69, 353, 457.**

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Fig. 21 Hieroglyphic four-sided prisms of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group: a. a piece which belongs stylistically well within the group; b. a piece which is reminiscent of hard stone hieroglyphic seals on account of its elaborate hieroglyphic inscriptions on all sides.

being cut with tools operated in the spindle.³⁷⁶ Moreover, the motifs are characterised by a tendency for elaboration which places them close to hard stone hieroglyphic seals.³⁷⁷ The more complicated inscriptions and the elaboration place these two seals in Evan's class B.

Pieces showing similar tendencies as the hieroglyphic prisms are also found among the inscribed steatite four-sided prisms. Here too, a group of seals with simple hieroglyphic inscriptions on one or two sides, which belong to Evan's class A, can be juxtaposed with another of pieces which show inscriptions on three or four sides (*fig. 21*).³⁷⁸ Most often, the workmanship on these latter seals is of high quality, the images are variously elaborated by the use of supplements or fillers, and the inscriptions are composed of three or more signs.³⁷⁹ Similar traits are also met on some steatite seals of other forms.³⁸⁰ Such soft and medium-hard stone seals combine elements of soft and hard stone engraving and are situated on the

³⁷⁶ For this subject, see footnote 190.

³⁷⁷ For this subject, see footnote 191.

³⁷⁸ Simple hieroglyphic inscriptions on one or two sides: CMS IV no. 128; CMS XII no. 70; CHIC no. 279. Inscriptions on three or four sides: CMS III no. 235; CMS X no. 52; Chapouthier 1946, 81 fig. 3 no. 7; Pelon 1965, 2 fig. 1; also the stepped rectangular plates CMS II,2 nos. 217, 315.

³⁷⁹ But, as is the case also with the prisms, e.g. 69, not always. See for example the linear execution of the motifs on Chapouthier 1946, 81 fig. 3 no. 7. For supplements, see pp. 163–164, also pp. 317–319; for fillers, pp. 327–330.

³⁸⁰ E.g. the Petschaft CMS III no. 103.

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cusps between the soft stone tradition which is represented by the majority of the prisms and the hard stone tradition as this is seen on the hard stone hieroglyphic seals.

The small number of prisms with hieroglyphic inscriptions and the predominance among those which show script of pieces inscribed only on one side suggests that the preference for the use of prisms in MM is not connected with the need to convey information on their three sides by the use of the hieroglyphic script.³⁸¹ This contrasts not only with hard stone three and four-sided hieroglyphic prisms in which inscriptions on all seal faces are common, but also with the multi-faced seals of the 'Archanes Script' Group.³⁸² As a rule, when inscribed, seals of this group bear inscriptions on all seal faces.³⁸³ Only by accepting Evans's idea that the devices which cannot be identified as hieroglyphs also bear some semantic meaning could the predominant function of the prisms of this group be seen as carrying information. However, such a supposition cannot be proven on the present evidence.³⁸⁴

STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

The summary rendering and similar ways in which the devices on the seals of the group are cut are obstacles in the path of any attempt to distinguish traits which could be indicative of a workshop or the idiosyncrasy of a hand. Using the customary techniques, experienced craftspeople would easily duplicate devices from other seals or 'pattern books'³⁸⁵ or even trace them from templates producing seals very similar to pieces not cut at their workshop.

The large number of the prisms recovered at the Malia Workshop as well as the fact that most of them are the contemporaneous production of one workshop offer a unique possibility for assessing the significance of iconography, technique, and material for the recognition of the idiosyncrasies of a workshop or hand. For that reason, this material is discussed separately in the section below. Following this, prisms with secure provenance from Malia which have not been recovered in the Workshop are discussed, before the rest of the material is handled.

³⁸¹ This could be proven wrong if Jasink's opinion is accepted that more devices than those categorised in the CHIC as hieroglyphs are actually signs of the hieroglyphic script (for this subject, see Jasink 2009, 189–195).

³⁸² Hard stone three and four-sided hieroglyphic prisms with inscriptions on all seal faces: e.g. CMS II,2 nos. 256, 296, 316; CMS IV no. 137; CMS VI nos. 91, 94, 101, 103, 104, 105; CMS X no. 312; CMS XI no. 14; CMS XII nos. 106, 109, 110. For the 'Archanes Script' Group, see Sbonias 1995, 107–113. For the possible reasons of the differences in the use of hieroglyphs on hard and soft stone three- and four-sided prisms, see pp. 357–358.

³⁸³ Sbonias 1995, 109. For some examples of such seals, see CMS II,1 nos. 393, 394; CMS VI nos. 13, 14. The only example where not all seal faces are inscribed is CMS II,1 no. 391.

³⁸⁴ For the significance of descriptive and 'pictographic' images, see pp. 349–356.

³⁸⁵ For the possible use of 'pattern books' from the Minoan seal engravers, see also Poursat 1977, 208.

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The prisms from the Malia Workshop

The prisms found at the Workshop are dated to MM IIB.³⁸⁶ With the exception of two examples cut in sepiolite or another soft mineral/stone,³⁸⁷ all other pieces are engraved in steatite. The freehand manipulated blade is the most commonly used tool whereas vertical pressure drills are often employed for the creation of ‘cup sinkings’. The use of the toothed/cup drill is not attested.³⁸⁸

Descriptive, ‘pictographic’, and ornamental images as well as hieroglyphic inscriptions are met.³⁸⁹ No prism with hieroglyphic inscriptions on more than one side is represented.

Thomas’s approach

The seals from the Workshop have already been an object of research by Eberhard Thomas.³⁹⁰ This author distinguishes six stylistic tendencies among the recovered pieces which he considers representative of a chronological evolution. Of them, one consists partially of prisms while with three, prisms constitute the greater part. Four prisms are seen as showing Prepalatial influences which they combine to a certain extent with later stylistic and iconographic tendencies.³⁹¹ The majority of remaining pieces are considered representatives of two stylistic tendencies, an older and a younger one, in which the evolution of the ‘style’ represented on the prisms at its acme can be followed. Finally, one piece is seen as showing the degenerated ‘style’ of the period in which the prisms met their decline.³⁹²

160, 171, 185, and 205 are seen as demonstrating influences from Prepalatial seals which come from the Mesara tholoi.³⁹³ **160**, which in the present study is excluded from the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms, could indeed be partially compared to some Prepalatial seals.³⁹⁴ As Poursat – Papatsarouha point out, the posture of the human figure **160 a** finds parallels in those of the figures on the stamp cylinders CMS II,1 no. 385 a and CMS II,1 no. 310 a.³⁹⁵ More to the point, the plastic curvature of the figure’s buttocks and calves and the possible fine fishbone pattern carved in the triangular board-like intaglio of its chest (?)³⁹⁶

³⁸⁶ See pp. 59–60, 74–75, 114–115.

³⁸⁷ **171, 191**. Despite the fact that it was not recovered there, **523** which is cut on sepiolite can also be attributed with certainty to the Malia workshop on stylistic criteria. For more on this piece, see p. 77 (the Hasty Cut Style).

³⁸⁸ For this tool, see p. 41.

³⁸⁹ For the nature of the images met on the prisms, see pp. 341–356. For a detailed discussion of the iconography of the prisms which come from the Workshop, see pp. 365–369.

³⁹⁰ Thomas 1989.

³⁹¹ **160, 171, 185, 205**.

³⁹² **163**.

³⁹³ Thomas 1989, 277–279.

³⁹⁴ For this piece, see the section ‘Prisms with EM III/MM I Influences’, pp. 115–120.

³⁹⁵ Poursat – Papatsarouha 2000, 264. However, compare the pose of the *Man in profile 160 a* to that of the man **502 a**. The first stamp cylinder is made of hippo ivory and the second of stone.

³⁹⁶ It is not certain that this fishbone pattern does actually exist. It cannot be discerned in the photograph of the

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might well be compared to those of the figure on the hippo ivory stamp cylinder CMS II,1 no. 222 a. Similar fishbone patterns are typically employed in order to render the mane of lions and venation of leaves on hippo ivory EM III/early MM IA seals.³⁹⁷ On the other hand, the *S-whirl of Busts of a dog/lion* **160 b** is a characteristic MM II device and does not find parallels on earlier seals. Thus, the piece could perhaps be seen as combining Prepalatial with Protopalatial elements.

Turning to **205**, at first glance, style and iconography set it off from the rest of the Workshop prisms. Its iconography is unique and its exact engraving is created by the combination of two slanting cuts, the ‘blanks’ which are so characteristic of the Workshop not being represented. These peculiarities, the round seal faces, and the significant depth of the grooves surrounding the engraved faces have led not only Thomas but also Poursat – Papatsarouha to compare the piece to **104** from Platanos and subsequently to the seals of Yule’s Platanos Goat Complex.³⁹⁸

However, as opposed to **205**, **104** is made of chlorite and not of steatite.³⁹⁹ The depth of the grooves of **205** is markedly smaller than that of the Platanos prism whereas no iconographic parallels which could suggest influence exist between **205** and any of the seals of the Platanos Goat Complex. On the other hand, both iconography and technical execution of the intaglios of **205 a** and **205 c** are easily comparable to those of **370 c** and **213 c** respectively, which belong to typical Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms. For that reason, **205** cannot be seen as showing influences from any of the Mesara seals.

The iconography of **205**, the rounded curves of its intaglios, and their broad V-shaped profiles do not find parallels among the pieces of the Workshop. However, a look at the technical execution of the intaglios of the three sides of **370** suggests that **205** would not be out of place there. Whereas the cross on **370 c** is cut in the same way as that on **205 a**, the face of the animal on **370 b** is configured as a flat board-like intaglio with deeper outline. Thus, it seems that different technical executions can be connected with the depicted device or the mood of the engraver at the time of their execution and need not always be suggestive of different workshops or hands. Moreover, neither the nearly round faces of **205** nor its

impression which is published in the CMS but can perhaps be made out in the photograph of the seal published there. While the author has examined the piece in the Heraklion Museum, attention was not paid to this detail because at the time of the examination, the subject of whether this element existed or not had not arisen. However, the fact that in the notes kept for this seal by the author nothing is mentioned, could suggest that this element does not exist.³⁹⁷ E.g. CMS II,1 nos. 228, 241, 248 a, 250 b. Such seals belong to Sbonias’s Lions/Spiral Group and Leaves/Ivory Group (for these groups, see Sbonias 1995, 89–102; for their dating, see Sbonias 1995, 98–99, 101).

³⁹⁸ Thomas 1989, 278; Poursat – Papatsarouha 2000, 264. For Yule’s Platanos Goat Complex, see Yule 1980, 211. For **104**, see pp. 124–125 (the Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster).

³⁹⁹ Thomas considers that both pieces are made of the same black steatite (Thomas 1989, 278). On the other hand, Yule clearly states that the seals of the Platanos Goat Complex “are in dull ‘serpentine’, dissimilar to the shiny soft stone of the Malia Workshop Complex” (Yule 1980, 211). Modern research by Walter Müller has helped identify this stone as chlorite (the stone is identified as chlorite in the copy of the CMS II,1 kept in the CMS Archive in Marburg).

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deep grooves are foreign to the Workshop.⁴⁰⁰ Under this scope and despite the peculiarities of **205**, the piece cannot be excluded with certainty from the production of the Workshop.

The last two prisms in which Thomas sees earlier influences, **171** and **185**, do not seem to differ in any way from the rest of the products of the Workshop. It has been noted above that round seal faces are not unknown there.⁴⁰¹ More to the point, while the iconography of **171** is not paralleled among the seals recovered at the site, stylistic considerations suggest that the piece fits well within the production of the Workshop.⁴⁰² Moreover, the device **171 a** finds good parallels not only on earlier seals as Thomas seems to suggest⁴⁰³ but also on Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.⁴⁰⁴ Apart from that, the only exact parallel for the device **171 b** is met on **362 c**, a typical Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prism with elongated seal faces. Furthermore, the soft stone used for the piece is also employed in the manufacture of **191** from the Workshop and possibly **523**, which is attributed to it on stylistic and iconographic grounds with certainty. Turning to **185**, its intaglios find very good stylistic and iconographic parallels among the pieces recovered in the Workshop.⁴⁰⁵ For these reasons, earlier influences on these pieces can be ruled out.

Among the rest of the prisms, Thomas makes out three 'styles'.⁴⁰⁶ The first, seen as still close to Prepalatial glyptic, is the 'style' of round and angular forms. The intaglios of the seals of this 'style' combine deep, round, rolling shapes with angular ones to create images composed of one or more devices. The images are either paratactic or show pictures of everyday life. The second 'style' is that of square cut and angular forms and is considered representative of the acme of the Workshop. It is represented by pieces which display angular, square-shaped and often board-like intaglios. Most images have a static character and show single figures whereas when more figures are combined on one seal face, they are arranged paratactically. Third is the 'style' of the schematic and flat relief, which, according to Thomas, represents the degeneration of the Workshop.⁴⁰⁷ This is represented by one piece engraved with shallow lines and showing schematic ornamental devices.

A closer look at Thomas's approach proves it inappropriate for the classification of the Workshop prisms into stylistic groups. More often than not, the pieces categorised as representatives of the two main 'styles' combine both these tendencies on their seal faces. **155** for example, is seen as a representative of the round and angular forms 'style' despite the fact that the technical execution and iconography of **155 c** cannot be seen as different from those of **134 b** and **147 a** which are classified by the same author with the square cut

⁴⁰⁰ For examples of prisms with round seal faces from the workshop, see **151** and **204**; for examples with deep grooves, see **174** and **177**.

⁴⁰¹ See footnote 400.

⁴⁰² See p. 77 (the Hasty Cut Style).

⁴⁰³ Thomas 1989, 279.

⁴⁰⁴ **44 b**, **95 c**.

⁴⁰⁵ Compare for example **183**. See also p. 77 (the Hasty Cut Style).

⁴⁰⁶ **177** is not classified with any of his 'styles' because it is seen as iconographically and stylistically unique with reference to the rest of the seals which come from the workshop (Thomas 1989, 282 footnote 32).

⁴⁰⁷ Thomas 1989, 279–284.

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and angular forms ‘style’. **135** and **143** are also seen as representatives of the first tendency although **135 b**, **143 a**, and **143 b** would fit much better with the second ‘style’. And **145** is classified with the second ‘style’ although **145 b** shows the characteristics of the first.

Thomas mentions that both styles can appear on one seal and sees in this phenomenon the transition from the one tendency to the other.⁴⁰⁸ At the same time, he poses the question whether this could also suggest that more than one hand could have worked on one piece.⁴⁰⁹ However, this view does not take into consideration the fact that *most* prisms show characteristics of both ‘styles’. According to the present author, the combination of different stylistic traits on the three seal faces of the prisms from the Workshop shows that larger room for variation should be allowed within the personal style of each craftsperson. While the two tendencies described by Thomas do actually exist, they are not enough to suggest the existence of two different ‘styles’ corresponding to different hands or different time periods. A ‘style’ connected to a hand, ‘workshop’, or time period can only then be defined when constantly recurring traits appear *on all three seal faces* of the relevant prisms, such that these stand out clearly from the rest of the related material.

Thomas’s last ‘style’ is represented by **163**, a piece considered of poor quality and seen as showing the last stage of the stylistic development of the Workshop prisms.⁴¹⁰ The reason for this estimation is that the intaglio is schematic and shallow. However, the author does not take into account the fact that the placement of the motifs on the seal face is correct. The execution of the design is, with the exception of the fact that the line is thinner than usual, comparable to that of many other pieces from the Workshop.⁴¹¹ In the opinion of the present author, the thinner and shallower line is an indication that the engraving is unfinished.⁴¹² Evely notes that the engraving would start from the combination of two slanting cuts creating a thin line. The latter would then be gradually broadened by the execution of new cuts along the length of the old.⁴¹³ In favour of an unfinished intaglio would also speak the fact that **163 b** is engraved with a sketch of an angular C-spiral which seems to represent incipient engraving.⁴¹⁴

Thomas’s approach presupposes that the seals found at the Workshop were amassed in its area during a considerable amount of time before the destruction throughout which the style of the Workshop met with its birth, development, and decline. However, against this supposition speaks the small size of the Workshop and the fact that the majority of the recovered seals are rejected pieces. It would seem illogical for the craftsperson to have kept in his/her confined working space more than the most recently rejected pieces until they filled the container where they were discarded. Moreover, stylistic considerations show

⁴⁰⁸ Thomas 1989, 282.

⁴⁰⁹ Thomas 1989, 282 footnote 33.

⁴¹⁰ Thomas 1989, 281.

⁴¹¹ E.g. **171 a**, **210 a**, **253 b**.

⁴¹² The possibility is also mentioned by Thomas (Thomas 1989, 281 footnote 27).

⁴¹³ Evely 1993, 149.

⁴¹⁴ This seal face is not published in the CMS.

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that with a few exceptions,⁴¹⁵ the bulk of recovered prisms constitute a stylistically and iconographically homogenous group. For these reasons, it would seem reasonably logical to assume that the majority of pieces were manufactured at the immediate time before the destruction of the building.⁴¹⁶

The stylistic tendencies represented among the prisms of the Workshop

The present study has discerned three different stylistic tendencies among the prisms recovered in the Workshop. Criterion for differentiating between these tendencies is the demonstration of the elements which define each of them on all three sides of one piece. The iconography on pieces of the three styles differs only to a certain extent. The existence among the output of one workshop of iconographically similar but stylistically different intaglios could be taken as an indication of the operation of different hands. Poursat suggests that the confined space of the Workshop⁴¹⁷ would not allow the simultaneous work there of more than one craftsman.⁴¹⁸ However, it is not thought impossible by the present author that two seated people could work together or even alternately in a space of this size. The third style consists of a few pieces of very poor workmanship which could be attributed to a person not directly connected to the craft and thus not considered a permanent tenant of this space.

Most pieces are representatives of a tendency which can be named the Deep Cut Style (*fig. 22 a–d*).⁴¹⁹ Characteristic are deep cut ‘blanks’ with flat floors outlined by cuts which penetrate deeper into the stone than the floors creating a typical outline effect.⁴²⁰ Often the joints of the outlines and the floors as well as those between the constituent elements of the motifs remain unconcealed such that a very schematic impression is created.⁴²¹ Other times, in cases of some animal depictions, greater care is taken to smooth out such joints so that softer, rounder, full-bodied intaglios are formed.⁴²² The various components of the intaglio are well bonded such that firm and compact devices are created.

⁴¹⁵ **160, 205 (?)**, **256**. For these pieces, see the discussion above.

⁴¹⁶ For this subject, see also Poursat 1981, 160.

⁴¹⁷ 3×3 m.

⁴¹⁸ Poursat 1996, 110.

⁴¹⁹ From the workshop: **134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 161, 162, 164, 165, 166, 169, 170, 172, 174, 175, 176, 177 (?)**, **178, 179, 182, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193 (?)**, **194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 205 (?)**, **206, 209, 212, 220, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 234, 235, 236, 237 (?)**, **239, 240 (?)**, **241, 242, 244, 245, 246 (?)**, **251, 254, 255, 257**. Other forms: CMS II,2 nos. 96, 97, 108, 127, 142, 157, 161, 166, 173, 195; Poursat 1996, 104 nos. HM 2521, 2524. Not from the workshop but produced in it: **120, 238, 322, 323 (?)**, **354, 356 (?)**, **496, 501**; see also the sections ‘Prisms with secure provenance from Malia which were not recovered in the workshop’, pp. 78–85, and ‘The rest of the material’, pp. 85–100.

⁴²⁰ E.g. **142 b, 145 a, 145 c, 154 a, 198 b, 228 a**.

⁴²¹ E.g. **155 c**.

⁴²² E.g. **143 c, 155 b, 169 a, 177 a, 177 b**.

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Fig. 22 Examples of Malia Workshop prisms: a.–d. Deep Cut Style; e.–h. Hasty Cut Style; i.–l. Irregular Cut Style.

The intaglio floors are often totally flat but more anomalous ones are also met.⁴²³ The cuts, often executed by a single move, are steady and decisive. ‘Cup sinkings’ can be cut out in the same way as the rest of the intaglio but most often, they are drilled. They frequently show a slightly triangular outline but perfectly round examples are also met.⁴²⁴ Often they penetrate the stone vertically and have flat bases or, more rarely, they are shallower and have convex profiles.⁴²⁵ Both cutting out and drilling of a ‘cup sinking’ can be met on a single surface.⁴²⁶ For that reason, the choice of the method cannot be taken as indicative of the operation of one hand.

⁴²³ Flat: e.g. **154 a**, **198 b**, **228 a**, **239 a**. More anomalous: e.g. **190 a**, **190 b**, **196 b**.

⁴²⁴ Triangular outline: e.g. **158 a**, **180**. Round: e.g. **188 b**.

⁴²⁵ Flat bases: e.g. **187 a**, **187 b**. Convex profiles: e.g. **188 b**.

⁴²⁶ e.g. **145 b**.

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Representational motifs and among them depictions of animals in particular predominate. As a whole, the devices are dexterously executed with an easiness in the manipulation of the tools which indicates great familiarity with the craft.

Shallower intaglios created by the joint of two slanting cuts, less ‘blanks’, and sparing use of ‘cup sinkings’ characterise the pieces of the second style; this can be named the Hasty Cut Style (*fig. 22 e–h*).⁴²⁷ The elements of the representational motifs which in the previous cluster were often represented by ‘cup sinkings’, i.e. head, chest, pelvis of humans, rump of animals, and bodies of vessels, are now gouged out. ‘Cup sinkings’ are found only in connection with ornamental devices and among those only on one occasion is vertical drilling documented.⁴²⁸ The engraving is quicker, more flowing, and less compact than that of the previous cluster.

Among the pieces cut in this style two clusters can be discerned.⁴²⁹ The engraving in the seals of the first cluster shows a certain familiarity with the craft as opposed to that of the pieces of the second which are engraved with a clumsiness that would befit a beginner’s hand (first cluster: *fig. 22 f, g*; second cluster: *fig. 22 e, h*). The cuts in the second cluster are less decisive and created by multiple operations. The intaglios are less regular, show intensive gouging, and uneven ‘blanks’. Multiple uncertain cuts create a hasty impression while plenty of correction takes place. Whether the two clusters correspond to two different hands or represent the first and more advanced works of one hand is unclear.

Hieroglyphs are not met on the existing pieces of the Hasty Cut Style. Among the ornamental devices, *S-spirals* are favoured, *Cross pommée* are rare, and *Swastikas* are not represented. Popular is the combination of an animal or bird with a branch or triangle in front of it. ‘*Beetles*’ are common, *Whirls* show no central cup sinking, *Waterfowls* have long bent leg with claw-like toes and no feathers, the *Heads of an agrimi* have no beard, whereas *Dogs/lions* are not met.

Four pieces belong to the Irregular Cut Style which is characterised by intaglios created by irregular, unsteady cuts which occasionally create the vague sketch of a device (*fig. 22 i–l*).⁴³⁰ The cuts are thin, shallow, and very rickety whereas ‘blanks’ are not met. ‘Cup sinkings’ created by drilling are attested.⁴³¹

The poor quality of the workmanship of the prisms of the Irregular Cut Style points to a totally inexperienced hand. Dessenne names this person ‘le gâcheur’⁴³² and Poursat identifies him as an apprentice.⁴³³ Given the small amount of these pieces and the very bad

⁴²⁷ From the workshop: a. **139** (?), **149** (?), **163** (?), **167**, **171**, **173**, **184**, **207**, **208**, **210**, **243**, **247**, **253**. Other seals: CMS II,2 nos. 141, 153; Poursat 1996, 104 no. HM 2653 (?). b. **168**, **183**, **185**, **233**. Other seals: CMS II,2 nos. 135, 152; Poursat 1996, 104 no. 2520 (?). Not from the workshop but produced in it: a. **451**, **523**, **546**, **556**, **588**. b. **250**.

⁴²⁸ **184 a**.

⁴²⁹ See footnote 427: a, b.

⁴³⁰ **152** (?), **157**, **181**, **211**. Other seals: CMS II,2 no. 99. In half of the examples, e.g. **157** and **181 b**, the sketch of a motif can be made out; in the rest, no device is discernible.

⁴³¹ **152 a**.

⁴³² Dessenne 1957, 127.

⁴³³ Poursat 1996, 110.

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quality of the intaglios, it is also possible that the four pieces were engraved by a person not actively engaged in the craft.⁴³⁴

204 has deep cut intaglios and vertically penetrating ‘cup sinkings’ which would speak in favour of its classification with the Deep Cut Style. However, the unfortunate execution of the devices designates the piece as an exercise or an apprenticeship piece. **159** and **180** are probably rejected pieces used for trial drillings.⁴³⁵

The pieces recovered in the Workshop constitute only part of its original production. It is certain that more seals had found their way out of it and were in use before its destruction. The fact that apart from the often repeated motifs, many devices and images are represented among its products only once⁴³⁶ is an indication that its iconographic repertoire would have been wider than the one represented by the finds recovered in its territory.

Some prisms which have not been found at the Workshop have been included among its production.⁴³⁷ These are considered its certain products on account of their iconography and style. Other pieces which show similar stylistic traits to the Workshop prisms but whose iconography does not find direct parallels among them have not been included in its production. For many of these seals, some of which are handled below, the possibility that they were manufactured there cannot be ruled out.

Prisms with secure provenance from Malia which were not recovered in the Workshop

Poursat sees all prisms which come from the Buildings A and B of Quartier Mu as products of the Seal Cutter’s Workshop.⁴³⁸ **250** from the vicinity of Building B has been included by the present author among the products of the Workshop on iconographic and stylistic grounds.⁴³⁹ **238** from Building A whose fragmentary preservation does not allow a stylistic evaluation, must have also come from there. This would be suggested by the fact that it is a fragment which is workshop fresh.

222 from Building B and **249** from the Potter’s Workshop can also be added to the production of the Seal Cutter’s Workshop on stylistic grounds (*fig. 23 a*).⁴⁴⁰ The two pieces build a stylistic and iconographic cluster with three other seals, **278** from ‘Lasithi’, **367**, and **501**. Common for the cluster is the depiction of a seated *Man in profile* with a hand projected in front touching the *Head of an agrimi* or a *Bovine*, a *‘Pole’ slung with ‘String vessels’* combined or not with a *Man in profile*, as well as a seated *Pig/boar* with slightly protruding belly.⁴⁴¹ The seal faces of these seals are ellipsoidal or most often elongated

⁴³⁴ E.g. a child or an adolescent (the drillings on **152 a** could not have been made by a young child).

⁴³⁵ For these pieces, see also p. 50.

⁴³⁶ E.g. **134 a**, **149 a**, **158 b**, **168 b**, **171 a**, **171 b**, **178 a**, **182 c**, **187 a**, **187 b**, **190 a–c**, **193 a**, **198 a**, **206 b**.

⁴³⁷ See the section ‘Not from the workshop but produced in it’ in the footnotes 419, 427.

⁴³⁸ Poursat in Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 188–189.

⁴³⁹ See the section ‘Not from the workshop but produced in it’, b., in the footnote 427.

⁴⁴⁰ Poursat also attributes these two seals to the Malia Workshop (Poursat in Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 189; Poursat 1996, 104–105).

⁴⁴¹ *Man in profile* with a hand projected in front touching the *Head of an agrimi* or a *Bovine*: e.g. **222 b**, **501 b**; also

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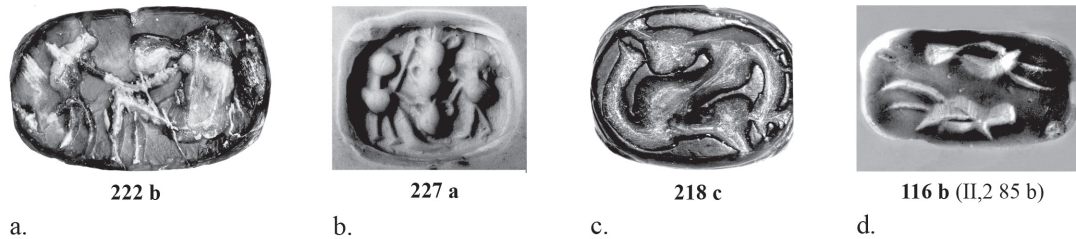


Fig. 23 Examples of prisms from places in Malia outside the Workshop which could have been produced there.

ellipsoidal. ‘Blanks’ with deep outlines and the use of ‘cup sinkings’ are common whereas the devices often appear somewhat elongated.

Technical execution and certain iconographic features of the prisms of the cluster find close parallels to some prisms of the Deep Cut Style. The standing *Men in profile* **367 b** and **501 a**, the seated *Men in profile* **222 b**, **249 c**, **278 c**, and **501 b**, the *Bovine* **278 c**, the *Swastika* **249 b**, the *Head of an ‘ox’* **249 c**, and the ‘*V-blossoms*’ **249 c** find good parallels on similar devices from the Workshop.⁴⁴² On the other hand, the technical execution of the *Heads of an agrimi* **222 b** and **501 b** differs from that of similar motifs of the Deep Cut Style.⁴⁴³ However, in the light of the aforementioned similarities the lack of comparable execution on similar motifs from the Workshop is considered accidental. It has been noted above that similar motifs can be cut in different ways which alone are not indicative of different styles.⁴⁴⁴

Turning to **227** from Building A, the engraved images are more complicated than the bulk of the images represented in the Workshop (*fig. 23 b*). However, they are easily comparable to the more complex images of **187** of the Deep Cut Style. The technical execution of the *Men in profile* **227 a** in particular is easily comparable to that of the figures **187 a** and **187 b**.⁴⁴⁵ Moreover, the thematic of **227 a** is partially comparable to that of **187 a** whereas as on **227 c**, a ladder band *Border* originally enclosed the image **187 c**.⁴⁴⁶ These considerations as

278 c. ‘*Pole*’ slung with ‘*String vessels*’ combined or not with a *Man in profile*: e.g. **278 a**, **367 b**, **501 a**. Seated *Pig/boar* with slightly protruding belly: e.g. **249 a**, **501 c**.

⁴⁴² Compare the standing *Men in profile* to the figure **198 a** whose upper body is however not created by a cup sinking; compare the seated *Men in profile* to **186 c**, **190 b** (this especially to the composition **278 c**), **203 a**, **220 a**; compare the *Bovine* to **143 c**, **198 c**; compare the *Swastika* to **143 a**, **195 c**; compare the *Head of an ‘ox’* to **154 a**, **174 b**; compare the ‘*V-blossoms*’ to **196 a**.

⁴⁴³ E.g. **174 a**, **195 a**, **198 a**. These devices are created by a drilled ‘cup sinking’ for the head and cutting by a blade for the muzzles and the ears. On the other hand, the *Heads of an agrimi* **222 b** and **501 b** are created only by cutting by a blade.

⁴⁴⁴ For this subject, see pp. 73–75.

⁴⁴⁵ Heads and torsos are represented by drilled ‘cup sinkings’ and the remaining parts of the body by linear elements.

⁴⁴⁶ No photograph of this side, which is fragmentarily preserved, is published in the CMS.

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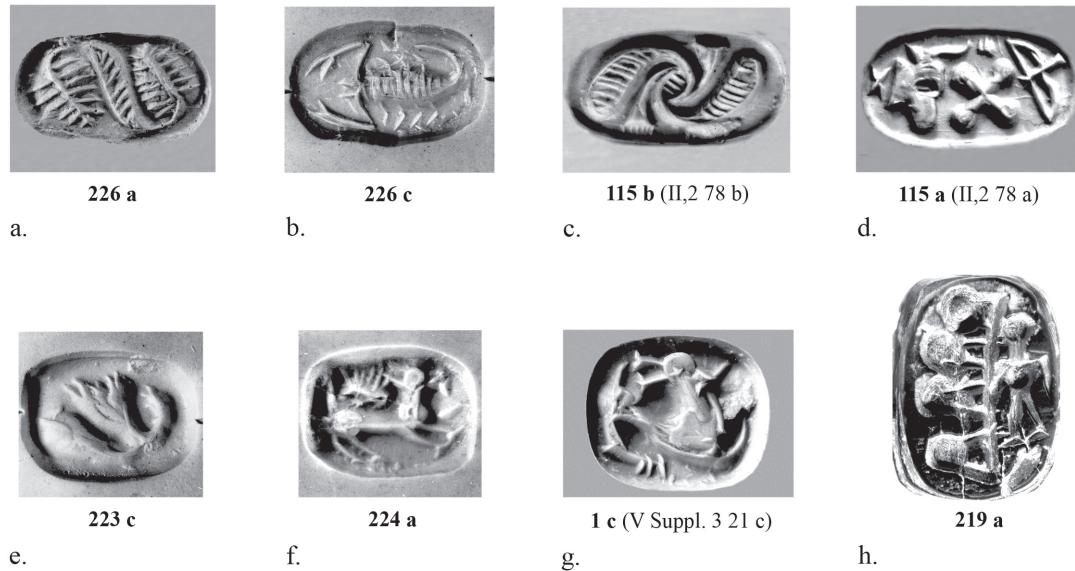


Fig. 24 Prisms from places in Malia outside the Workshop whose relationship with it is not clear.

well as the fact that the piece comes from the vicinity of the Workshop would support the idea that it constitutes part of its production.

Apart from the scorpion **226 c**, which is comparable to the same but more schematically executed device on the four-sided prism CMS II,2 no. 153 c, the iconography of **226** from Building A does not find good parallels among the pieces which come from the Workshop (fig. 24 a, b). On the other hand, its devices are iconographically and stylistically easily comparable to those of **115** from Quartier Γ in Malia (fig. 24 c, d). The two pieces are mainly connected by the occurrence of a repetition two-armed whirl composed of floral motifs on one seal face (fig. 24 a, c). The centre of both whirls shows similar hatching whereas the thick venation of the *Paisleys* **115 b** brings to mind that of the body of the *Scorpion* **226 c**.

The intaglio of the *Profile head of a 'bull'* **115 a** is rounder than most intaglios which come from the Workshop. However, a similar feature is also found on **177 a** and **177 b** of the Deep Cut Style. Moreover, the flowing curve of the animal's horn finds a good parallel on the curve of the horn of the *Head of a 'goat'* **178 a**. These considerations do not allow the possibility to be ruled out that **226** and **115** constitute products of the Workshop.

The two pieces form a cluster with another three seals which come from Malia. The first two are the signets CMS II,2 no. 77 from Quartier Γ and Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 171 no. 240 from Quartier Mu which show the same rounded intaglios

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as **115 a**.⁴⁴⁷ The third is the four-sided prism Pelon 1965, 2 fig. 1 from Quartier E. The side b of this seal is iconographically and stylistically easily comparable to **226 a** whereas the carefully executed hieroglyphs and the deep and rounded intaglios of the remaining sides are reminiscent of the devices on **115 a**.

The fragmentary preservation of **225** from the vicinity of Building A which could be attributed to the Deep Cut Style could suggest that the piece constitutes one of the rejections of the Workshop. On the other hand, although the iconography of **223** from Building A is not represented in the Workshop group, its bumpy intaglios could suggest affiliation with the Hasty Cut Style (*fig. 24 e*). However, the fact that the piece is substantially abraded would indicate that it was in use at the time of the destruction.

224 from the same building forms a cluster with **1** from Quartier N, **219** from the Malia Palace, **27**, **58**, **81** from 'Artsa', **88** from Palaikastro, **589** from 'Malia', and **590** from the 'neighborhood of Lamnon' (*fig. 24 f–h*). These pieces combine on their seal faces two or more of the following motifs: A standing ruminant – at times with forwards slanting front legs – with another device in front of it, a regardant crouching *Dog/lion*, a *Man in profile* touching a 'Pole' slung with 'String vessels', a *Cross pommée* or a *Triskeles pommée* with 'Lily flowers' as angle supplements, a procession of *Men in profile*, and an 'Arrow' b.⁴⁴⁸ Characteristic are deep 'cup sinkings' and a lot of correction resulting in untidy anomalous 'blanks'. In two cases, hollow 'cup sinkings' are attested whose core is either left undisguised or hidden under linear cuts (*fig. 24 h*).⁴⁴⁹

It is uncertain whether these pieces were manufactured at the Workshop because their iconography and style are not immediately recognisable as belonging there. In any case, it is considered possible that they are the product of one hand or workshop. A free selection is observed in the combination of the motifs, e.g. the standing ruminant is not always combined with the same motif and the *Dog/lion* appears both as a single motif and also combined with other devices. This, as well as similarities in the execution of the intaglios, would speak against the hypothesis that the pieces are the works of more than one craftsman copying motifs from a seal he/she had in front of him/her. Instead, it would seem more probable that they were created by one person alternately combining devices from their own iconographic repertoire or following the orders of their clients.⁴⁵⁰ The fact that four of these pieces come from Malia and one from the neighbouring Artsa would suggest that the pieces were manufactured at Malia.

⁴⁴⁷ For a discussion of these seals, see footnote 551.

⁴⁴⁸ Standing ruminant with another device in front of it: **1 a**, **27 c**, **58 a**, **81 c**, **88 a** (with no device characteristic of the cluster on the other two sides), **219 a**, **224 a**, **589 c**; for a similar composition, see also **374 a**. Regardant crouching *Dog/lion*: **1 c**, **27 b**, **58 b**, **219 b**, **589 b**, **590 b**. *Man in profile* touching a 'Pole' slung with 'String vessels': **1 b**, **81 a**, **219 c**. *Cross pommée* or *Triskeles pommée* with 'Lily flowers' as angle supplements: **58 c**, **590 c**. Procession of *Men in profile*: **27 a**, **589 a**. 'Arrow' b: **27 c**, **224 c**.

⁴⁴⁹ **58 a**, **58 c**, **219 c**. For a discussion of such 'cup sinkings', see pp. 41–42.

⁴⁵⁰ For the subject of the person responsible for the choice of the depicted devices, see pp. 355–356 and footnote 648.

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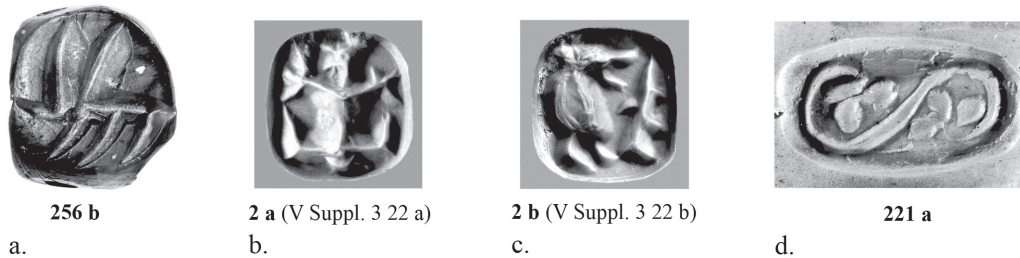


Fig. 25 Prisms from places in Malia outside the Workshop which were probably not manufactured there.

256 from the Potter's Workshop is considered by Poursat to be a possible exercise coming from the Seal Cutter's Workshop (*fig. 25 a*).⁴⁵¹ However, the fact that the piece is wholly preserved, that it is not workshop fresh, and that it shows well executed motifs would speak against this hypothesis and in favour of the idea that the seal was in use at the time of the destruction of the Workshop.

The aforementioned piece is part of a cluster consisting of prisms which show on one side a plainly rendered quadruped whose parts are created by the combination of two broad, slanting, and not particularly deep cuts.⁴⁵² 'Blanks' are not met whereas 'cup sinkings' appear only in connection with ornamental devices. The depicted animals are most often a *Dog/lion* or an *Agrimi*. The legs are rendered in a simple linear manner and in some cases they are characteristically short. The overall impression is that of a simple, flowing, loose execution. *Triskeles pommée* and *Cross pommée*, *Whirls of 'Beaked' busts*, and *Whirls* are the most common ornamental devices connected with the cluster.

While the technical execution of the pieces is not dissimilar to that of **205** from the Workshop,⁴⁵³ these seals do not find good stylistic parallels among the rest of the material recovered there. Apart from **256** which comes from Malia and **82** which was found in Kavousi, no other piece has a provenance.

2 from Quartier N can be set apart from the products of the Workshop because it does not find any stylistic or iconographic parallels among the prisms recovered there (*fig. 25 b, c*). The piece constitutes part of a cluster of seals which have compact shape and compressed ellipsoidal seal faces which can, at times, appear almost rectangular or square.⁴⁵⁴ Often,

⁴⁵¹ Poursat 1996, 105.

⁴⁵² **82, 111, 401, 404 (?)**, **459**; also **215**, which is engraved exclusively with ornamental motifs.

⁴⁵³ Execution and iconography of the *Agrimia* on these pieces are also easily comparable to the chlorite **104 b** from Platanos (for this piece, see p. 124). However, the use of steatite and iconographic considerations (the *Whirls of 'Beaked' busts*, the *Triskeles Pommée*, the *Cross Pommée*, the *Whirls*, and the *Dogs/lions*) suggest that these prisms belong to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group.

⁴⁵⁴ **2, 5, 6, 61, 68, 84 (?)**, **85, 97, 125, 129, 213, 260, 270, 285, 289, 296 (?)**, **303, 338, 339, 375 (?)**, **376, 377, 391, 402, 408, 415, 420, 426, 458, 460, 488, 492, 504, 505, 515, 520, 524, 547, 558, 559, 568**.

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the stringhole channel runs in line with the shorter dimension of the seal faces whereas elongated seal faces and grooves are not met.

One can observe a preference for representational devices whereas the ornamental devices are mainly represented by whirls, swastikas, and repetition compounds composed of representational or floral motifs. Spirals and Z-shaped devices are not met. A variety of repeatedly recurring patterns, some of which are not represented outside the cluster, are characteristic: *'Men with semicircular body'*, large *Amphorae* with belly handles or large *Vessels without handles*, *Headless waterfowls*, *Fish* occupying the largest part of the seal face, *Heads of an 'ox'* with T-shaped horns, combinations of three or four whirls, *Spiders* with angular legs, *Swastikas of "Saw branches"*, *Stars of 'Wheat stalks'*, devices or compositions put together from *"Toothed sickles"*, whirls of *'Beaked' busts*, *Heads of a 'dog/lion with hook'*, fictional creatures, *'II-legs'*, regardant *Waterfowls* with long beaks and feathered tails, *'Centipede branches'*, and *Pigs/boars* with semicircular body and crossed legs.⁴⁵⁵ Most common is the occurrence of a single device or two devices on one seal face but images which combine more than two devices are also met.⁴⁵⁶ Paratactic combinations as well as combinations of two motifs arranged in 180° rotational symmetry are favoured. Descriptive, ornamental, and perhaps also a few 'pictographic' images are met.⁴⁵⁷ Among the descriptive images, narrative syntheses are extremely rare.⁴⁵⁸ Hieroglyphic inscriptions are absent.⁴⁵⁹

Compact, often squat devices as well as clear cut, well-defined intaglios of good to very good workmanship are the rule. The distinctively deep intaglios are created by broad decisive cuts and display 'blanks' with flat floors or broad V-profiles. Only little correction takes place and the engraving appears precise and clean. The use of the drill for the creation of 'cup sinkings' is not particularly popular. Details like mouths or muzzles, claws or hoofs, and fur or feathers are executed by broad dynamic cuts. Mouths and muzzles in particular are often elongated and bar-shaped.

With the exception of three pieces, the seals of the cluster which have a provenance have been found at Malia, its neighbouring area, and various locations on the Lasithi Plateau.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁵ *'Men with semicircular body'*: e.g. **5 c**, **85 a**. *Amphorae* with belly handles/large *Vessels without handles*: e.g. **2 c**, **270 c**. *Headless waterfowls*: e.g. **6 c**, **85 a**. *Fish*: e.g. **68 b**, **376 b**. *Heads of an 'ox'*: e.g. **376 c**, **460 a**. Combinations of whirls: e.g. **129 a**, **420 c**. *Spiders*: e.g. **285 c**, **339 a**. *Swastikas of "Saw branches"*: e.g. **270 b**, **339 b**. *Stars of 'Wheat stalks'*: e.g. **391 b**, **524 a**. Devices or images composed of *"Toothed Sickles"*: e.g. **415 b**, **504 a**. Whirls of *'Beaked' busts*: e.g. **84 c**, **408 b**. *Heads of a 'dog/lion with hook'*: e.g. **84 b**, **289 b**. Fictional creatures: e.g. **260 a**, **492 b**. *'II-legs'*: e.g. **285 a**, **558 b**. Regardant *Waterfowls*: e.g. **338 b**, **488 b**. *'Centipede branches'*: e.g. **6 a**, **85 a**. *Pigs/boars* with semicircular body and crossed legs: e.g. **338 c**, **568 a**.

⁴⁵⁶ E.g. **5 b**, **5 c**, **61 c**, **85 b**, **125 b**, **460 c**.

⁴⁵⁷ 'Pictographic' (?): e.g. **125 c**, **504 b**. For the difficulty of differentiating descriptive from 'pictographic' images, see pp. 345, 347–349.

⁴⁵⁸ As narrative is understood the image **5 c**.

⁴⁵⁹ The *"Trowel"* (?) **5 c** does not function as a script sign.

⁴⁶⁰ Malia: **2** (Malia); **68**, **84**, **85**, **213**, **285**, **289**, **488** ('Malia'). Neighbouring area of Malia: **61** ('Mochos'); **260** (Smari). Lasithi Plateau: **5**, **6** (Agios Charalampos); **129** (Trapeza); **270**, **296** ('Lasithi'). Pieces from other regions:

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As the majority of examples come from Malia, the prospect that this workshop was located there seems possible.

A.21 from Quartier Δ is well preserved. The piece does not find iconographic parallels among the steatite seals from the Workshop. Stylistically it does not show any elements which align it with or distance it from the products of the Workshop. It could either have been manufactured there or in another workshop utilising similar materials and techniques.

218 from Quartier E can be attributed to the Workshop (*fig. 23 c*). The *Head of a 'ram'* **218 b** is iconographically and stylistically easily comparable to the same motifs on **156 a** and **162 b** from there. Moreover, the *Protomes of a bovine* **218 c** find good stylistic parallels to the foreparts of the *Bovines* **155 b** and **196 a**. The fact that two-armed whirls of animal parts are not unknown at the Workshop⁴⁶¹ proves that the concept is not foreign to it. The lack among the pieces recovered there of two-armed whirls of *Protomes of a bovine* and of the variation of the *Man in profile* **218 c** are further indications that the repertoire of this workshop was larger than that represented on the pieces recovered in its territory.

The state of **126** from Quartier E and **385** from the vicinity of the Palace does not allow their stylistic evaluation. On the other hand, **221** from the Agora is well preserved. It constitutes the only wholly preserved prism which is not workshop fresh but is engraved only on one side (*fig. 25 d*).⁴⁶² The linear rendering of the body of the *S-spiral* as well as the rounded outlines and intaglios of the *Trefoils* which create fuller, less schematic devices distance this piece somewhat from the prisms of the Workshop. However, the lack of engraving on its other sides which could assist further its stylistic evaluation does not allow a verification of the hypothesis that the seal was not created there.

The execution of the *Heads of an agrimi* on **116 b** from Pierres Meulières is easily comparable to that of the similar head on **222 b** which probably comes from the Workshop (*fig. 23 d*).⁴⁶³ Moreover, the slanting sharp cuts of all intaglios are comparable to the cuts of which the *Agrimi* **193 a** which also comes from the Workshop is composed. Thus, it is possible that **116** was manufactured at the Workshop.

116 forms a cluster with **487** from 'Malia' and the sealing CMS II,6 no. 193 from Quartier Mu. A very similar *Spider* with eight legs connects the three pieces. Although the different shape of the seal faces creates a more elongated and squatter version of the same motif, stylistic considerations bring the three pieces together. The slanting and sharp cut creates a somewhat hasty impression. The two body parts are roughly triangular, positioned at some distance to each other, connected by a relatively long straight element, and gouged instead of drilled.

The affinity of the two prisms is also noted in the technical execution of their remaining intaglios. Noteworthy is how the heads of the *Heads of an agrimi* **116 b** and the leaves of the *Quatrefoil* **487 c** are created by the combination of two slanting concave cuts whose

492 ('neighbourhood of Heraklion'); **125** ('Elounta'); **339** ('Siteia').

⁴⁶¹ E.g. the animal whirls **149 a**, **182 c**.

⁴⁶² The state of **34**, which only has two engraved sides, is puzzling. For more on this subject, see footnote 53.

⁴⁶³ For **222**, see pp. 78–79.

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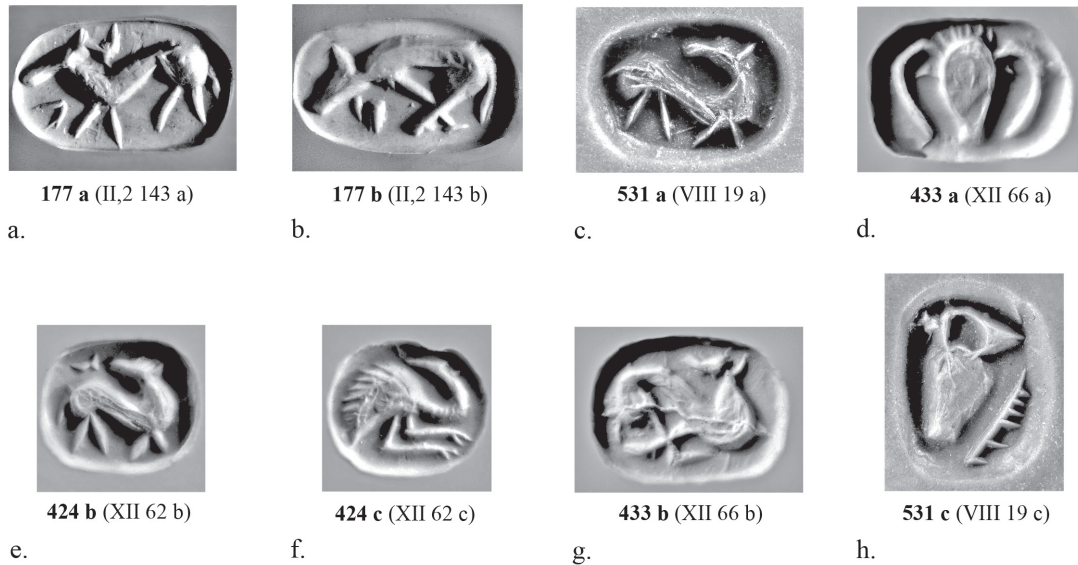


Fig. 26 Cluster of the Full-Figured Bovine.

edges meet such that a narrow cavity which is not flattened to a ‘blank’ is created between them.

The rest of the material

An assessment of the rest of the material reveals on the one hand the existence of more pieces close to the Malia Workshop prisms; and on the other, the more diverse character of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prism which is not exclusively connected to the stylistic tendencies represented in the Workshop. Influences from other seal groups, local preferences, idiosyncrasies of a craftsman or workshop, and progressive tendencies create pieces which differ markedly from the material recovered there.

177 from the Workshop, **424**, **433**, and **531** are assembled in the Cluster of the Full-Figured Bovine (*fig. 26*).⁴⁶⁴ The pieces are brought together on the basis of the depiction

⁴⁶⁴ **440**, which is cut in breccia, also shows a similar quadruped on one side. However, the animal here is composed of four variously sized ‘cup sinkings’ connected by linear cuts. This difference in the technique is due to the larger difficulty of engraving the harder stone with a blade. The broad chest can be rendered much more easily by the drilling of a large ‘cup sinking’ than by freehand engraving. **440 a** is engraved with a *Pair of Circles*, a device atypical for the group and typical of hard stone engraving (for this subject, see p. 109, also pp. 37, 42–43 and footnote 552). While the possibility that **440** was manufactured by the same person as its steatite counterparts cannot be ruled out, it cannot be supported by stylistic considerations.

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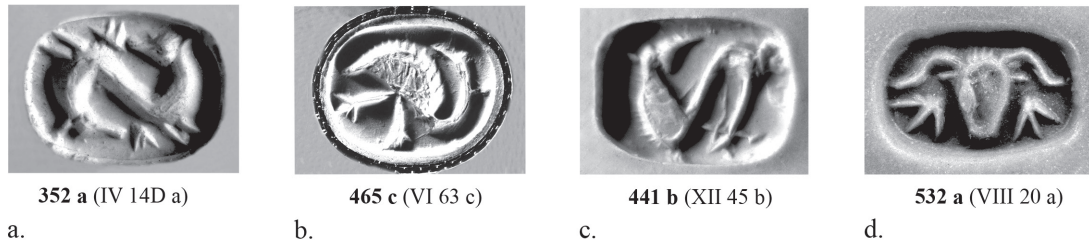


Fig. 27 Cluster of the Flat 'Blanks'.

on one seal face of a *Bovine* with characteristically full-figured body and four linear legs (fig. 26 a, c, e, g). Characteristic of the configuration of the animal is the rounded outline of chest and rump. Especially the latter hangs heavy from the waist of the quadruped. The deep intaglios are formed as 'blanks' with angular or rounded U-profiles.⁴⁶⁵ All but one animal are standing, their hindquarters being situated higher than their chests such that the back legs either terminate higher than the front legs or are markedly longer than these. The animal 433 b has only two legs which show hooves and are crossed under the body. The other sides of the pieces of the cluster are engraved with various motifs showing 'blanks' with flat floors and hardly discernible or no outlines at all (fig. 26 b, d, f, h).⁴⁶⁶ The iconographic but also stylistic similarity of the quadrupeds on these seals as well as the similarities in the execution of the intaglios on their other sides could suggest their engraving by one hand. If that is the case, the pieces would be products of the Malia Workshop where 177 also comes from.

The Cluster of the Flat 'Blanks' consists of pieces showing board-like intaglios which often lack deeper outline walls, precision in the execution, and recurring iconographic themes (fig. 27).⁴⁶⁷ A crouching or seated/lying *Dog/lion*, the frontal head of a ruminant, and a *Waterfowl* are the most popular devices. Detailed observation reveals certain stylistic and iconographic similarities of these seals and those of the previous cluster. The *Protomes of a bovine* 352 a and 373 a are stylistically and iconographically easily comparable to the foreparts of the *Bovines* 424 b and 531 a (figs. 26 c, e; 27 a).⁴⁶⁸ The soft, rounded intaglio on 352 a is easily comparable to that of the animals 177 a, 424 b, and 531 a (figs. 26 a, c, e; 27 a). The uplifted hindquarters of the *Pig/boar* 441 b are reminiscent of the rump

⁴⁶⁵ Angular U-profiles: 424 b, 433 b. Rounded U-profiles: 177 a, 531 a.

⁴⁶⁶ E.g. the *Unidentifiable quadruped* 177 b, the *Profile head of a 'bull'* 424 a, the *Waterfowl* 424 c, the *Head of a 'ram'* 433 a, and the *Jug* 531 c.

⁴⁶⁷ 72 (?), 326 (Lasithi), 352 (Malia), 373, 393 (?), 435, 441, 450 (?), 465, 475, 483, 506, 532, 539, 555, 548, 584 (Malia), 595. Compare the execution of the heads of the *Protomes of a bovine* 393 c to the execution of the heads of the *Dogs/lions* 497 c. Also, compare the intaglios of 393 c and 497 c to the intaglios of 394 c. For 394, see pp. 95–96 (the Cluster of the Progressive Tendencies).

⁴⁶⁸ Compare the plump bodies, the short linear legs, and the overall body posture of these figures.

STYLE GROUPS

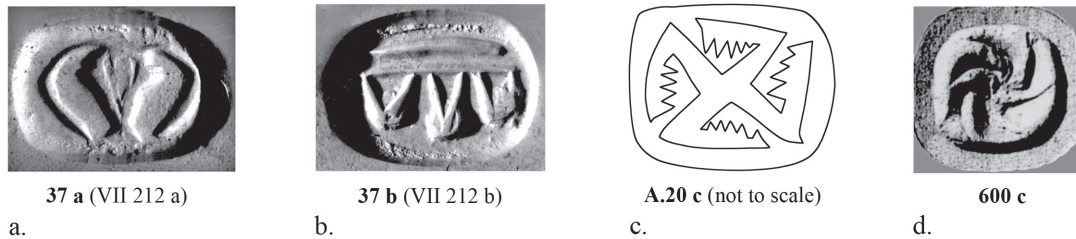


Fig. 28 Cluster of the Uncomplicated Images.

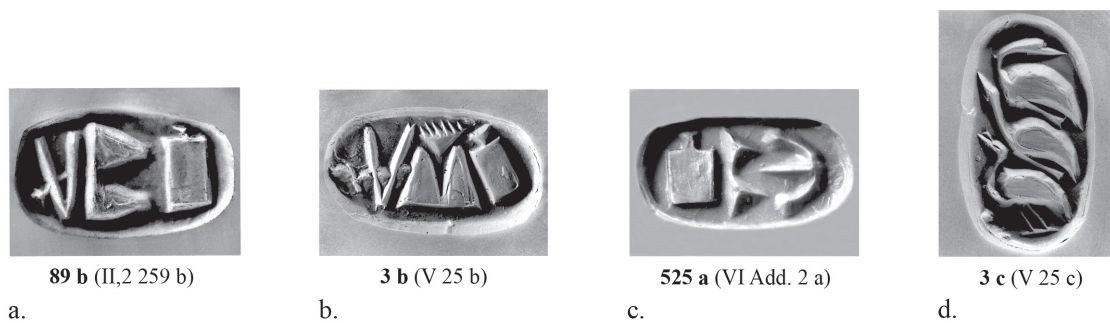


Fig. 29 Cluster of the Clear Cut Hieroglyphs.

of the full-figured *Bovines* whereas its pose and the configuration of its hooves find a good parallel on the animal **433 b** (figs. 26 a, c, e, g; 27 c). The technical execution of the waterfowl **465 c** is comparable to that of the bird **424 c**⁴⁶⁹ and the shape of the face of the animals **465 a**, **475 a**, and **532 a** is easily comparable to that of the animal **433 a** (figs. 26 d, f; 27 b, d). The upper body of the human figure **72 a** is rendered in a similar way to the body of the quadruped **177 b** and the configuration of the animal head under the figure's legs can be compared to that of the small *Unidentifiable motif IX* **177 a**. These considerations could suggest a connection of at least some of the pieces of the cluster with the Malia Workshop despite the fact that seals with similar iconography do not come from there.⁴⁷⁰

11, **37**, **600**, **A.15**, and **A.20** from 'Malia', constitute the Cluster of the Uncomplicated Images (fig. 28). The pieces are engraved with simple images mostly composed of one or two devices. Their intaglios show drilled 'cup sinkings' and are either formed as 'blanks' or have V-profiles. Typical motifs are a *Whirl*, a *Swastika*, the frontal head of a ruminant, and a 'Pole' slung with 'String vessels' with a horizontal *Bar* above it. These pieces are loosely connected and the lack of a feature particularly characteristic to them does not allow their attribution to one hand.

⁴⁶⁹ Compare especially the way in which the heads and the tails of the animals are rendered.

⁴⁷⁰ However, compare the *Heads of an agrimi* **450 a** to those on **174 a**, **195 a**, **199 a** of the Deep Cut Style.

STYLE GROUPS

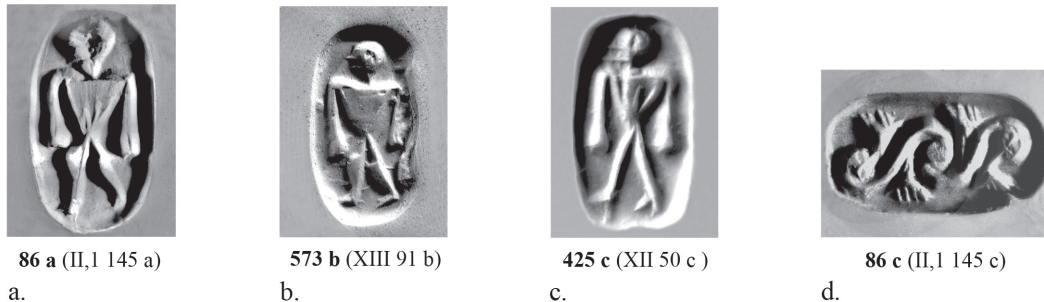


Fig. 30 Cluster of the Man with the Swollen Knees.

3 from Mochlos, **89** from Palaikastro, and **525** make up the Cluster of the Clear Cut Hieroglyphs (*fig. 29*). The pieces, which are engraved to a high standard, show hieroglyphic inscriptions on one or two sides.⁴⁷¹ ‘Blanks’ with flat floors and no outlines as well as well-defined clear cuts are characteristic. Two pieces show the same and the third a similar inscription on one side (*fig. 29 a–c*). The other sides of these prisms are engraved with various skilfully executed motifs (*fig. 29 d*). The very high quality and the similar iconography of **3** and **89** could suggest that they constitute the products of the same ‘workshop’, if not hand.⁴⁷² The seals are not stylistically dissimilar to prisms of the Deep Cut Style from the Workshop although pieces with such clear intaglios are not represented there.

86, **452**, and **573** are brought together in the Cluster of the Man with the Swollen Knees (*fig. 30*). **86 a** and **573 b** show a standing *Man in profile* of similar dimensions with broad triangular torso and tall legs with bulging knees (*fig. 30 a, b*). The heads are cut and not drilled, the open mouth is rendered by a thin cut for each lip, the torso is configured as a flat ‘blank’ without deeper outlines, and the arms issue from the upper side of the torso to reach the height of the knees broadening characteristically downwards. **452 c** shows a similar figure of smaller dimensions which does not have swollen knees (*fig. 30 c*). However, head, lips, arms, torso, and legs of the man are similarly executed as those of the previous figures.⁴⁷³ **452** and **573** are also comparable by the similarity in the execution of the quadrupeds on their other sides. Both *Agrimia* **452 a** and **573 a** have a broad flat chest, a small upwards lifted rump, a long tub-shaped muzzle, similarly configured back and front legs, as well as triangular hooves. The similarity in the execution of the human figures on the three pieces and the stylistic similarities of the animals **452 a** and **573 a** which are shown in different poses suggest that the three seals were cut by the same hand or ‘workshop’. The pieces

⁴⁷¹ **3 b**, **89 a**, **89 b**, **525 a**, **525 b**.

⁴⁷² **525** could also be attributed to the same ‘workshop’ although its iconography differs from that of the other two seals.

⁴⁷³ Also compare the three figures to that on **15 b**.

STYLE GROUPS

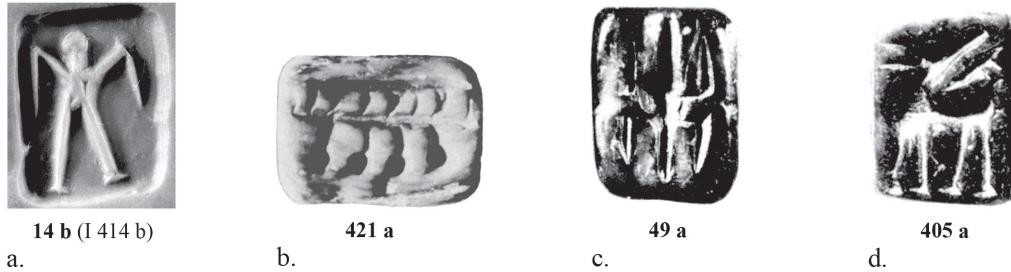


Fig. 31 Cluster of the Motionless Figures (b.–d. adapted from Yule 1980 b, pls. II, III).

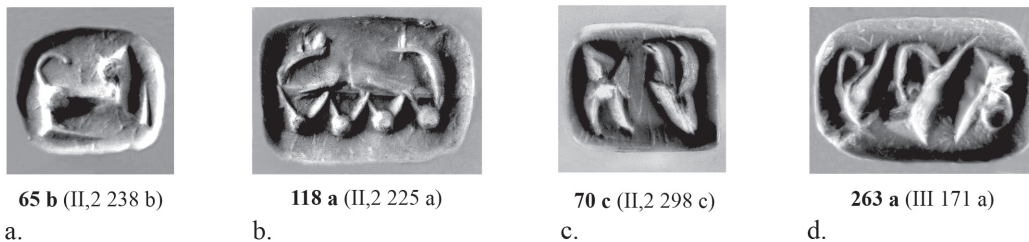


Fig. 32 Cluster of the Hasty Slanting Cut.

are not stylistically and iconographically⁴⁷⁴ dissimilar to the prisms of the Malia Workshop although no particular elements can support their attribution to it.

Eight pieces are brought together in the Cluster of the Motionless Figures (*fig. 31*).⁴⁷⁵ Characteristic of these pieces are stiff and motionless devices as well as rectangular seal faces. Most devices are schematically rendered by straight cuts but the existence of nicely curved elements betrays a familiarity with the craft.⁴⁷⁶ A smaller cluster shows very similar iconography, characteristic of which are a standing *Man in profile* with chevron-shaped arms, a *Lizard*, and a “*Ladder band*” slung with ‘*String vessels*’ (*fig. 31 a–c*).⁴⁷⁷ The peculiar iconography of some pieces,⁴⁷⁸ which is on some occasions not paralleled outside the group,⁴⁷⁹ the rectangular seal faces, and the idiosyncratic stiffness of the devices can create the impression that these seals are not Minoan. However, the fact that the authenticity of

⁴⁷⁴ *Running S-spirals with ‘Papyrus flowers’ as curve supplements* for example are encountered on prisms from the Malia Workshop, e.g. compare **168 c** to **86 c** (*fig. 30 d*).

⁴⁷⁵ **14, 36, 46, 405, 421, 432, 480, 541**.

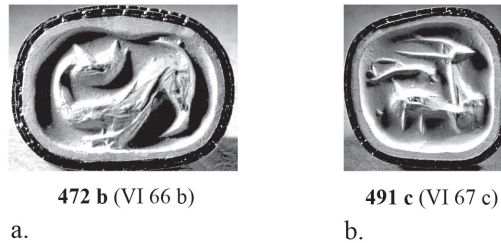
⁴⁷⁶ E.g. the tentacles of the ‘*Squid*’ **14 c**; the tail of the *Dog/lion* **36 b**.

⁴⁷⁷ **14, 46, 421, 432, 541**.

⁴⁷⁸ **36, 46, 405, 421, 432, 541**.

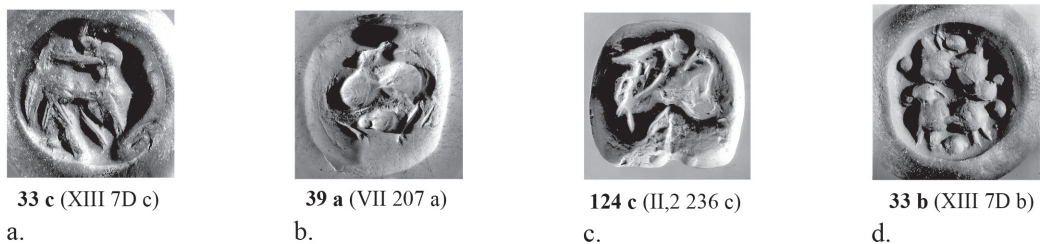
⁴⁷⁹ E.g. the variation of the “*Ladder band*” slung with ‘*String vessels*’ **46 c** and **421 a** and the *Lizard* **46 a** and **432 b**.

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a. 472 b (VI 66 b) b. 491 c (VI 67 c)

Fig. 33 Cluster of the Plain Quadruped.



a. 33 c (XIII 7D c) b. 39 a (VII 207 a) c. 124 c (II,2 236 c) d. 33 b (XIII 7D b)

Fig. 34 Cluster of the Bulky Quadruped.

others cannot be disputed⁴⁸⁰ does not support this suggestion.⁴⁸¹ It would seem likely that at least the pieces of the iconographic sub-cluster are the products of one hand. The three pieces which have a provenance are said to come from eastern Crete.⁴⁸²

The Cluster of the Hasty Slanting Cut is assembled from pieces whose intaglios often have V-profiles created by hasty slanting cuts (*fig. 32*).⁴⁸³ The cluster can be subdivided in pieces showing a preference for the depiction of a crouching *Dog/lion* and a “*Horn bar*” slung with ‘*String vessels*’ and in those on which two or three *Jugs* with long pointed beaks arranged in 180° rotational symmetry are combined in an image (*fig. 32 a, b, d*).⁴⁸⁴ It is possible that the pieces of each sub-cluster were created by one hand. Whereas the technical execution of these seals is not dissimilar to that met on seals of the Hasty Cut Style, drilled ‘cup sinkings’ are here widely used (*fig. 32 a, b*).⁴⁸⁵ The *Heads of an agrimi* **70**

⁴⁸⁰ **14, 480.**

⁴⁸¹ The only piece which could be seen as more suspicious is **405**. The depiction on **405 b** of a ship with a flag (?) or a sail (?) makes the image look awkward as the depiction of a flag on a Minoan artefact would be an anachronism. While sails with inner cross hatching are common on ships of the talismanic style (such as those on CMS VI no. 467; CMS VIII no. 106; CMS X no. 100; CMS XIII no. 14), in these cases the sail extends on both sides of the mast.

⁴⁸² **36** (‘Epano Zakros’), **46** (‘eastern Crete’), **480** (‘Mirampelo’).

⁴⁸³ **65, 70, 118** (?), **263, 324, 334, 562.**

⁴⁸⁴ Pieces showing a preference for the depiction of a crouching *Dog/lion* and a “*Horn bar*” slung with ‘*String vessels*’: **65, 70, 118** (?), **562**. Pieces combining in an image two or three *Jugs* with long pointed beaks: **263, 324, 334.**

⁴⁸⁵ The information on the provenance of the pieces does not allow the localisation of the cluster: **65** (‘neighbourhood

STYLE GROUPS

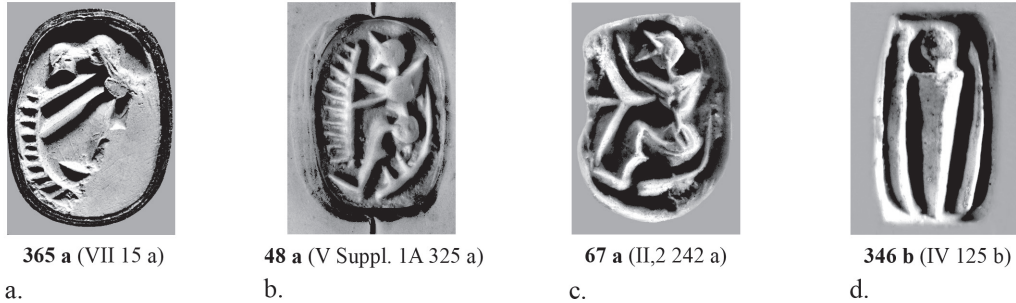


Fig. 35 Cluster of the Dynamic Cut.

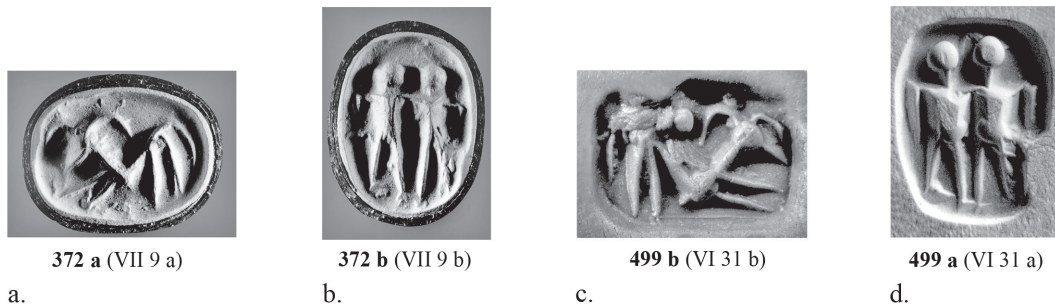


Fig. 36 Cluster of the Crouching 'Sheep'.

c are on the one hand stylistically similar to the same motifs of this style, but on the other, lack the pointed edges on the two sides of the forehead which are characteristic of similar devices on seals of the Hasty Cut Style (figs. 22 g; 32 c).

472 from 'central Crete' and 491 from 'eastern Crete' are brought together in the Cluster of the Plain Quadruped (fig. 33). The pieces show plainly rendered quadrupeds on one and two sides respectively.⁴⁸⁶ The animals have full, plump, and somewhat elongated bodies as well as squat proportions. The intaglios are either board-like 'blanks' or more often have V- or U-profiles and a bumpy interior. Also perhaps related to the cluster is 431 which has, however, very deep and regular intaglios.⁴⁸⁷ The cluster is not very homogeneous as the remaining sides of the pieces do not show common elements. Iconographically, the quadrupeds are close to the quadrupeds of the prisms clustered around 256.⁴⁸⁸

of Malia'), 118 ('Krasi'), 263 ('Lasithi'), 324 ('Mesara').

⁴⁸⁶ 472 b, 491 b, 491 c.

⁴⁸⁷ Compare the quadrupeds on the seals of the cluster to the plainly rendered *Dog/lion* 431 b. Compare to a certain extent the intaglios of 431 to the intaglios of 482. For 482, see pp. 94–95 (the Prism with the T-Shaped Head of an 'Ox').

⁴⁸⁸ For this cluster, see p. 82.

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33, **39**, and **124** from ‘Malia’, constitute the Cluster of the Bulky Quadruped (*fig. 34*). The seals show on one or two seal faces quadrupeds with voluminous bodies rendered by two broad ‘cup sinkings’, one for the chest and one for the rump.⁴⁸⁹ A ‘cup sinking’ also sits on the edge of their muzzle. Less full-bodied but still comparable to these animals is the *Dog/lion* on CMS XII no. 3D a which shows the same pose as the quadrupeds **33 c** and **39 a** and ‘cup sinkings’ on the edges of its, in this case open, mouth. While the iconography on the other sides of the pieces varies, characteristic is a preference for the frequent use of ‘cup sinkings’ as elements of the motifs and as fillers as well as the presence of unconcealed tool marks in the intaglios.⁴⁹⁰ The similarities between the seals of the cluster could suggest that they are the products of one hand or ‘workshop’.

48 from ‘Moni Odigitria’, **67** and **346**, both from ‘Malia’, and **365** are brought together in the Cluster of the Dynamic Cut (*fig. 35*). The intaglios of these pieces have V-profiles created by long decisive cuts. Deep drilled ‘cup sinkings’ are widely used whereas board-like intaglios are missing. A *Man in profile* with open mouth composed of ‘cup sinkings’ linked by straight cuts, *Daggers* with long blades, as well as long and dense spikes issuing from the motifs are typical for the cluster.⁴⁹¹ The pieces are iconographically and stylistically so close that their engraving by one hand is considered very possible.⁴⁹²

372 and **499** constitute the Cluster of the Crouching ‘Sheep’ (*fig. 36*). The iconography and technical execution of the two pieces are very similar. The intaglios have V-shaped profiles created by the combination of two slanting cuts.⁴⁹³ Drilling is used for the creation of the ‘cup sinkings’ whereas ‘blanks’ are not met. Both pieces show a crouching ‘*Sheep*’ on one seal face and a procession of two *Men in profile* on another.⁴⁹⁴ The two seals are so similar that their attribution to one hand would seem possible.

349 from ‘Choumeri’, **351** from ‘Kasteli’, **386**, and **414** constitute the Cluster of the Squat Figures (*fig. 37*).⁴⁹⁵ The seals have a similar form and iconography and show certain similar stylistic traits. They have compressed round or ellipsoidal seal faces which appear squarish. A standing or seated *Man in profile*, a crouching *Agrimi* or *Dog/lion*, and *Amphorae* with belly handles or *Jugs* are the commonest motifs.⁴⁹⁶ Each seal face bears one or at the most two devices. The intaglios are deep and configured as ‘blanks’ with flat floors whereas

⁴⁸⁹ **39 a**, **124 c**, **33 b**, **33 c**.

⁴⁹⁰ ‘Cup sinkings’ as elements of the motifs: e.g. **33 b**, **39 a**, **39 c**, **124 a**; CMS XII nos. 3D b, 3D c. ‘Cup sinkings’ as fillers: e.g. **33 b**, **124 b**. For tool marks on the intaglios, e.g. **33 c**, **124 b**, **124 c**.

⁴⁹¹ *Man in profile*: **48 b**, **346 b**. *Daggers*: **48 a**, **67 b**, **346 c**, **365 c**. Devices with spikes: **48 a**, **67 a**, **365 a**.

⁴⁹² For a comparison of **48 a** and **67 a**, see also Poursat – Papatsarouha 2000, 267.

⁴⁹³ The execution of the motifs of **499** can be better seen on the photographs of the seals than on their impressions published on the CMS.

⁴⁹⁴ ‘*Sheep*’: **372 a**, **499 b**. *Men in profile*: **372 b**, **499 a**.

⁴⁹⁵ For the relation of this cluster to the Cluster of the Muscular Men, see p. 94.

⁴⁹⁶ **349** and **386** show the same devices on all three sides. The deep intaglios and the configuration of the *Amphorae* bring to mind the cluster assembled around **2** from Malia. However, the iconography of the Cluster of the Muscular Men which is related in some way to the Cluster of the Squat Figures does not allow the classification of the latter with the cluster assembled around **2**.

STYLE GROUPS

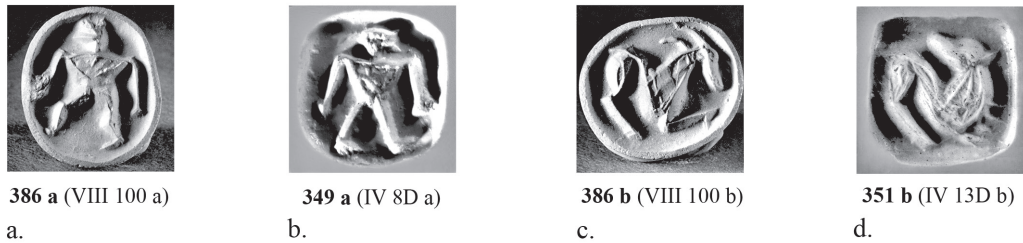


Fig. 37 Cluster of the Squat Figures.

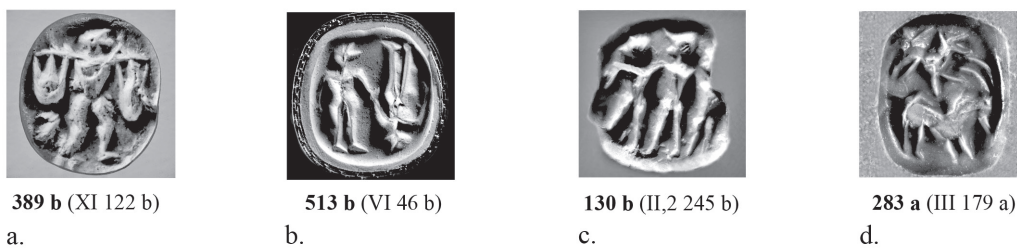


Fig. 38 Cluster of the Muscular Men.

‘cup sinkings’ are not used. However, some stylistic differences are noted among pieces of the cluster. Whereas the human figures **349 a** and **386 a** are squat proportioned and have a broad triangular-shaped upper body, their outlines differ significantly (*fig. 37 a, b*). **349 a** has stick-like legs whereas the legs of **386 a** are bent at the knees and the buttocks and chins are slightly bulged out. The upper body of **386 a** has slightly bulging sides, such that a more rounded but also bulky torso is created. The quadrupeds **349 b** and **386 b** represent a more delicate and a more robust version of the same animal, although their grain-shaped rumps are very similar (*fig. 37 c*). Stylistically, easily comparable to **386 b** is **351 b** (*fig. 37 d*). The pieces of the cluster are not so close that they could be attributed to one hand.

Six prisms are brought together in the Cluster of the Muscular Men (*fig. 38*).⁴⁹⁷ The seals are connected by depictions of humans with voluminous legs as well as those of full-bodied and relatively full-figured quadrupeds.⁴⁹⁸ Buttocks, calves, and occasionally thighs of the human figures are bulged out in an attempt to create more naturalistic images. Among the depictions, a more schematic and a more expressive tendency can be distinguished. The legs of the figures of the first tendency are less voluminous and the upper part of their body

⁴⁹⁷ **130** (‘Kato Metochi’), **283**, **389**, **498** (‘Kasteli Pediados’), **513** (‘Milatos’), **564**. Also belonging to the cluster is the four-sided prism CMS VI no. 25 (‘Malia’).

⁴⁹⁸ Humans: **130 b**, **283 a**, **389 b**, **513 b**, **564 a**. **498** is included to the cluster because of the iconographic and stylistic similarity of the *Man in profile* **498 c** to that on **389 a**. Quadrupeds: **130 c**, **283 b**, **389 c**, **513 c**, **564 b**.

STYLE GROUPS

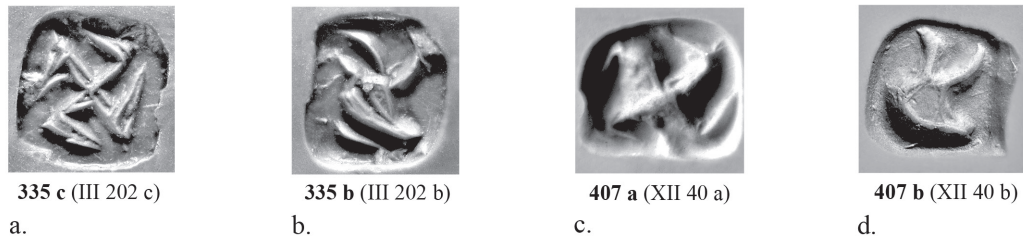


Fig. 39 Cluster of the Head of an Agrimi with Forward Directed Muzzle.

is triangular (*fig. 38 c*).⁴⁹⁹ The figures of the second tendency are more filled out as they have legs with expressive curves and bodies with slightly bulging outlines (*fig. 38 a*).⁵⁰⁰ The fact that the two tendencies are met on the two seal faces of one prism⁵⁰¹ shows that such differences cannot be associated with the operation of different hands. It would seem possible that at least some of the pieces of the cluster are the products of one hand.⁵⁰²

A comparison between the figure **386 a** of the Cluster of the Squat Figures and those on **283 b** and **564 a** of the Cluster of the Muscular Men could suggest that the two clusters are connected in a way.⁵⁰³ The figures on the three prisms are squat proportioned, show more or less bulging outlines, and have an open mouth created by the combination of deep, broad cuts. The pieces of the two clusters which have a provenance come from the broader area around Malia.⁵⁰⁴

The form, iconography, and technical execution of **335** and **407** bring them together in the Cluster of the Head of an Agrimi with Forward Directed Muzzle (*fig. 39*). The two pieces are gable-shaped, have compressed ellipsoidal or rectangular seal faces and do not show grooves. Both are engraved with the *Head of an agrimi* and a *Swastika* on two seal faces. The execution of the *Heads of an agrimi* is characteristic. Unlike other examples, the muzzle and the horns are placed more to the front and closer to each other, such that the head stands on its underside and not at the lower edge of the muzzle. No ‘cup sinkings’ are used in the engraving whereas the seal faces bear either single devices or a main device and a filler. It is possible that the two pieces were manufactured by the same hand.

Because of its idiosyncratic iconography and style, **482** is classified by itself as the Prism with the T-Shaped Head of an ‘Ox’ (*fig. 40*). The simplistic configuration of its devices is unique among the prisms of the group. The *Head of an ‘ox’* **482 a** is better described as

⁴⁹⁹ E.g. **130 b**, **389 a**.

⁵⁰⁰ E.g. **283 b**, **389 b**.

⁵⁰¹ **389 a**, **389 b**.

⁵⁰² E.g. **283**, **389**, **498**.

⁵⁰³ Manufactured by the same ‘workshop’ or hand? For the Cluster of the Squat Figures, see pp. 92–93.

⁵⁰⁴ Cluster of the Muscular Men: **130** (‘Kato Metochi’), **498** (‘Kasteli Pediados’), **513** (‘Milatos’); CMS VI no. 25 (‘Malia’). Cluster of the Squat Figures: **349** (‘Choumeri’), **351** (‘Kasteli’).

STYLE GROUPS

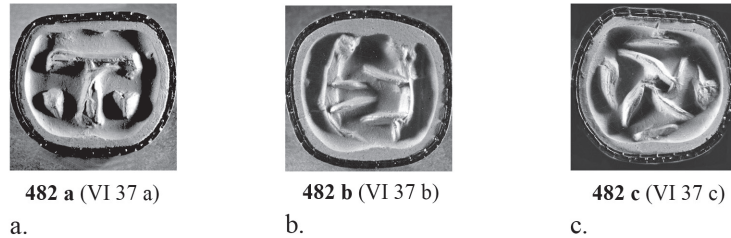


Fig. 40 Prism with the T-Shaped Head of an 'Ox'.

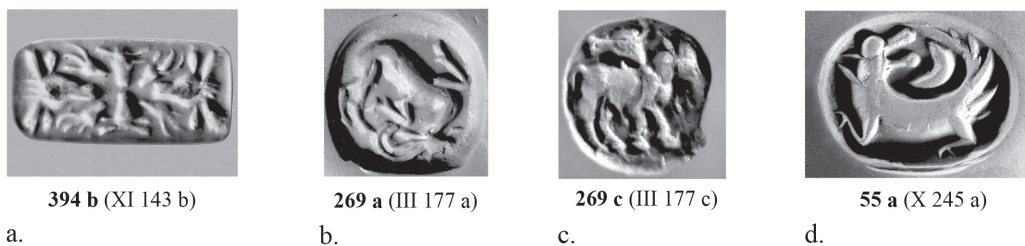


Fig. 41 Cluster of the Progressive Tendencies.

a T-shaped motif whereas the quadrupeds **482 b** are composed of two curved lines with a slight bulge on their upper part denoting the head and two lines rendering the legs. The circular configuration of the *Wedges* **482 c** is comparable to the similar composition of the *Wedges* **431 b**.⁵⁰⁵ The deep, thick linear intaglios are very summarily rendered. Devices, technical execution, and compositions of the piece find very good parallels on the engraving of the disc CMS V no. 28.⁵⁰⁶ The two pieces could possibly be attributed to one hand.

55, **269**, and **394** constitute the Cluster of the Progressive Tendencies. The motifs of **394** are more dexterously executed and the images are more complicated than those of the bulk of the prisms (*fig. 41 a*). The outlines of the *Agrimia* **394 a** are nicely curved and the 'blanks' are softened such that more naturalistic depictions are created. Fine cuts are used for the horns and the beard of the quadrupeds adding to the creation of graceful devices. On **394 c**, great care is taken in rendering all parts of the *Protomes of a horned ruminant*. The symmetrical composition of eight animal heads on **394 b** creates an ornamental image that differs from the rest of the images met on prisms which do not combine so many devices.

Turning to **269**, the execution of the quadruped **269 c** is unique (*fig. 41 c*). The animal is the only immediately recognisable example of a *Bull* on prisms, a motif popular in LM glyptic.⁵⁰⁷ The plastic rendering of the body differs from other intaglios in that care

⁵⁰⁵ The deep intaglios of this piece are perhaps comparable to a certain extent to those of **482**.

⁵⁰⁶ **482 b** is perhaps also comparable to CMS II,1 no. 491 (?).

⁵⁰⁷ E.g. CMS II,6 nos. 38, 43; CMS II,7 no. 41; CMS VI no. 181.

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has been taken not only to smooth out the ‘blanks’ but to plastically model their surface such that the actual configuration of the body and thus the volume of the muscles can be discerned.⁵⁰⁸ The pose of the *Agrimi* **269 a** is unprecedented among the prisms and could constitute an attempt to depict an animal lying on the ground as it is seen from top view (*fig. 41 b*).⁵⁰⁹ The interiors of the animal bodies on **269 a** and **269 b** are dexterously smoothed out such that more rounded and soft intaglios are created.

The devices of **394** and **269** escape the schematic character which is typical of most devices in the group and show a desire for elaboration and greater proximity to natural forms. The two pieces could be the products of one very dexterous hand. This would be suggested by the very similar flute-shaped intaglios of the animal bodies on **269 a**, **269 b**, **394 a**, and **394 c**. Also, certain iconographic similarities between the devices of the two pieces cannot be attributed to chance. The *Agrimia* **269 a** and **394 a** have similarly bent front legs, rounded rumps, and similarly rendered hooves with dew claws. Comparable are the drop-shaped ears of the *Agrimi* **269 a** with those of the *Heads of an ‘ox’* **394 b**. Also the configuration of the former animal’s head is very similar to that of the *Heads of an agrimi* **394 b**.⁵¹⁰

Turning to **55**, its iconography partly anticipates LM tendencies (*fig. 41 d*). **55 a** is engraved with the earliest example of a Minoan dragon, a motif mainly met in the LM period.⁵¹¹ Moreover, the use of ‘cup sinkings’ for rendering the eyes and nostrils of the *Head of a ‘ram’* **55 b** does not find parallels in MM glyptic but is common on LM iconography.⁵¹² The intaglios of the motifs in question are very smooth and rounded lacking deeper outlines, a feature which suggests care and dexterity in their execution.

493 and **549** are assembled in the Cluster of the Triangular Scorpion (*fig. 42*). The two pieces show a very similar *Scorpion* with triangular body and small square head on one seal face (*fig. 42 a, c*). **493 c** is engraved with a composition of triangular *Leaves* and **549 b** shows a leaf-shaped device with triangular body (*fig. 42 b, d*).⁵¹³ Both the leaves and the leaf-shaped device have fishbone venation. The iconographic similarities between the two prisms could suggest cutting by one hand. However, it is also possible that the one piece is a copy of the other or that the similarities between the *Scorpions* are due to the existence

⁵⁰⁸ Similarly rendered is the animal on the signet CMS II,2 no. 77.

⁵⁰⁹ For a somewhat similar contorted pose on another seal of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group, see CMS VI no. 25 c. For the possibility of an attempt to depict an animal lying on the ground as it is seen from top view, see pp. 298, 301.

⁵¹⁰ The way the *Protomes of a bovine* **393 c** and the bodies of the *Dogs/lions* **497 c** are executed brings to mind the bodies of the *Protomes of a horned ruminant* **394 c**. The rumps and back legs of the quadrupeds **497 c** are similar to those of the animals **269 a**, **269 b**, and **394 a**. Particularly interesting is the fact that the joint between lower and upper back leg of the animals **497 c** is configured in the same way as that of the animals **269 a** and **269 b**. Of great interest is also the fact that the intaglios on the other two sides of **497** and **393** show schematic motifs and board-like interiors. For **393**, see also p. 87 (the Cluster of the Flat ‘Blanks’).

⁵¹¹ For this motif, see ‘*Minoan dragon*’. For ‘cup sinkings’ as lips, see also the *Dog/lion* CMS XII no. 3D a.

⁵¹² E.g. CMS II,3 nos. 225, 338; CMS II,4 no. 157; CMS XII no. 162 a.

⁵¹³ For this latter, see *Unidentifiable device XXXV*.

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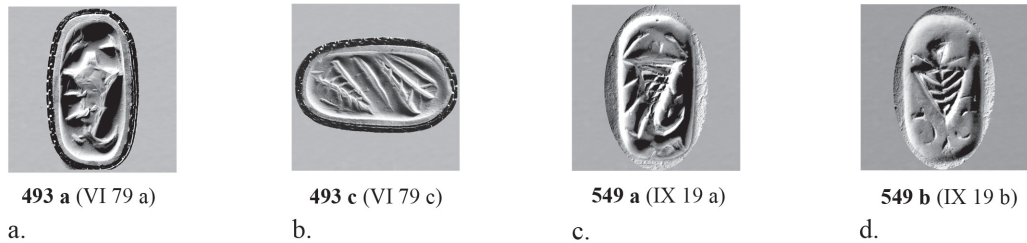


Fig. 42 Cluster of the Triangular Scorpion.

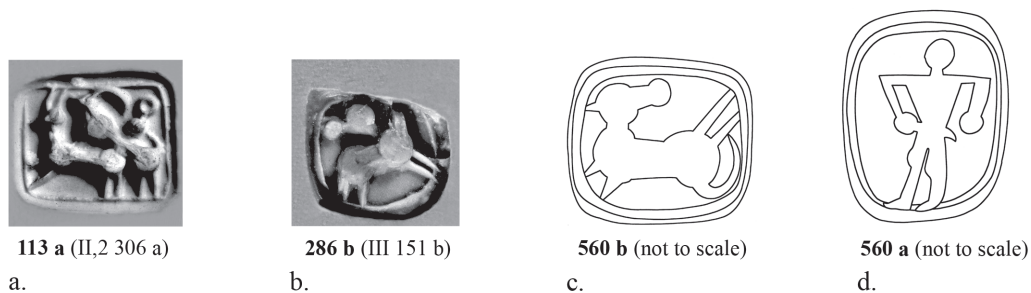


Fig. 43 Cluster of the Man and the Ruminant.

of ‘pattern books’ distributed among the various workshops. This is because while **493** is a typical representative of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms, the cross hatching on the *Scorpion’s* body **549 a** and on the larger *Paisley* **549 c** is atypical for the group. On the other hand, it brings to mind the configuration of the manes of some lions of Sbonias’s Lions/Spiral Group and the internal hatching of paisleys on certain hippo ivory seals.⁵¹⁴ For that reason, it is possible that **549** would belong better with the Prisms with EM III/MM I Influences.⁵¹⁵

113, **286**, and **560** constitute the Cluster of the Man and the Ruminant (*fig. 43*). The pieces have compressed ellipsoidal or rectangular seal faces and no grooves. The repertoire is clearly representational. Most often occurring motifs are standing *Men in profile*, *Agrimia*, *Headless ruminants*, and heads of a ruminant. All but one image⁵¹⁶ are outlined by a *Border* on the inner side of which are firmly attached the feet of the figures. The quadrupeds have four stick-like legs whereas the knees of the humans are rendered by protuberances. Drilled flat based ‘cup sinkings’ are used for the creation of heads, muzzles, hands, and the foreparts and rumps of the animals.

⁵¹⁴ Lions: e.g. CMS II,1 no. 224 a. *Paisleys*: e.g. CMS II,1 no. 282. For Sbonias’s Lions/Spiral Group, see Sbonias 1995, 89–99.

⁵¹⁵ Stylistically similar to **549** are also CMS X no. 211 and Kanta 1999, pl. LXXXIV MO 579 right.

⁵¹⁶ **113 c**.

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The iconography of the cluster shows elements which connect it to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms but also some which are most common in the glyptic of central Crete. The *'Pole' slung with 'String vessels'* **113 c** is a device almost exclusive to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group.⁵¹⁷ The animal echelons **286 b** and **560 c** (?)⁵¹⁸ find a good iconographic parallel to the image **269 c** whereas the *'Figure-of-eight shield'* **113 a** is comparable to the same motifs on **13 a** and **490 c** (*fig. 43 b*). The small *Headless dogs/lions* **113 b** are reminiscent of the suckling *Headless ruminants* **294 a** and **425 b**. The image **425 b** is further connected to that on **113 b** by the feature of the quadrupeds stepping on the inner side of the border. Also iconography and composition of **425 c** are easily comparable to the image **286 a**.

The contorted seated/lying pose of the ruminants **113 b** and **560 b** finds one parallel among the poses of the animals met on the remaining Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms (*fig. 43 c*).⁵¹⁹ The pose is commoner on bone/hippo ivory seals from the Mesara, although there it is connected with lions and not ruminants.⁵²⁰ The *'cup sinkings'* in which the arms of two figures terminate⁵²¹ find parallels with those of the figures on the reel Chatzi Vallianou 1987, pl. 192 e from Sopata Kouse⁵²² but also with those of the figure **428 a** of a Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prism (*figs. 43 d, 72 a*). The scene of the mating *Agrimia* **113 a** is unique among the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms (*fig. 43 a*). The only known such mating scene from an early period is that on the hippo ivory conoid CMS II,1 no. 369 from Siva. Finally, the *Dagger* crossing the waist of the figure **560 a** is paralleled in the dagger of the figure on the convex side of the bone hemicylinder Oxford, Ashm. Mus., 1938.790 which comes from 'near Knossos',⁵²³ a piece rejected by Kenna as a forgery, rehabilitated by Gill, and rejected once more by Hughes Brock (*fig. 43 d*).⁵²⁴

Iconography, style, and form support the attribution of these prisms to one hand. Despite the fact that most of their images find iconographic parallels on Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms certain influences from the bone/hippo ivory glyptic of central Crete are evident. For that reason, the possibility that the pieces were manufactured in central Crete cannot be ruled out. Interestingly, **113** comes from 'Kamilari (?)'; on the other hand though, **286** is reported to come from 'Lasithi'.

Some seal faces engraved with devices composed of centred-circles show iconographic elements reminiscent of the glyptic of central Crete (*fig. 44*).⁵²⁵ The substitution of the scrolls

⁵¹⁷ For an example of the device encountered on a stamp cylinder from the Mesara, see CMS II,1 no. 300 b.

⁵¹⁸ If an animal echelon is actually depicted here. For this subject, see footnote 2115. For animal echelons on prisms, see p. 351.

⁵¹⁹ **517 b**. Also compare to a certain extent the pose to the pose of the *Agrimi* **269 a**.

⁵²⁰ E.g. CMS II,1 nos. 249, (250 a), 252 a, 295 b.

⁵²¹ **286 c, 560 a**.

⁵²² For this seal, see pp. 137–138.

⁵²³ Evans 1921, 196 footnote 4.

⁵²⁴ Kenna 1960, 154; Gill 1967, 114–118; Hughes Brock 1989, 83–84.

⁵²⁵ **16 a, 288 b, 333 b, 333 c, 380 a, 382 c, 392 b, 569 c, 572 a**. The pieces to which these seal faces belong are classified as Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms because iconography and cutting technique of their other faces are

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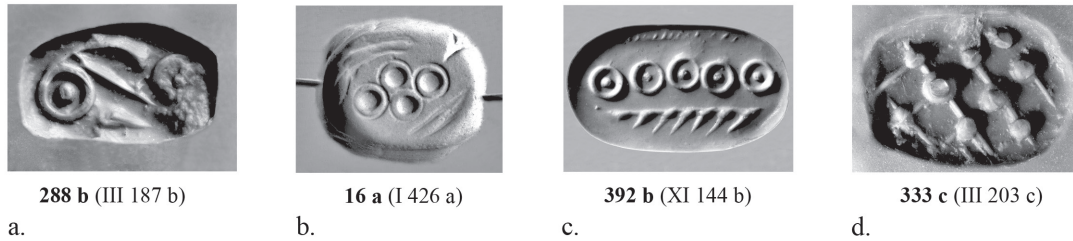


Fig. 44 Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms with centred-circles whose compositions show influences from the glyptic of central Crete.

of spirals by centred-circles, such as this seen on **288 b** and **569 c**, is mostly associated with the MM chlorite seals of central Crete (*fig. 44 a*).⁵²⁶ However, the resulting compositions in the chlorite seals differ considerably from those met on the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.⁵²⁷ Repetition compounds composed of centred-circles are common on the Central Crete Ornamental Prisms.⁵²⁸ However, on the latter, only filed lines or vertically drilled ‘cup sinkings’ are combined with the centred-circles in one image. On the other hand, the elements combined with repetition compounds of centred-circles on the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms are as a rule cut freehand (*fig. 44 b, c*). The exception to this is **333**, whose cutting technique and iconography suggest greater influence from the glyptic of central Crete (*fig. 44 d*). Centred-circles, cup-sinkings, and lines on **333 b** and **333 c** are engraved with the vertical pressure technique whereas the *Disc grid* **333 c** is a device characteristic of seals of the Central Crete Ornamental Group.⁵²⁹

353 from ‘Pinakiano’ and **457** constitute the Cluster of the Medium-Hard Hieroglyphic Prisms (*fig. 20 b–d*).⁵³⁰ The pieces, cut in medium-hard stones and showing hieroglyphic inscriptions on all their sides, stand out among the rest of the prisms on account of their more complex inscriptions, more elaborate iconography, and very good workmanship.⁵³¹ The intaglios are deep and have very regular U-profiles, such that it impossible to say with certainty whether they were created freehand or they were deepened with freehand

typical for this group. Compare for example **92 c** to **450 b**; **288 c** to **70 c**; **307 b** to **436 c**; **392 a** to **145 a**.

⁵²⁶ E.g. CMS VI no. 114; CMS II,5 nos. 188, 189. For a discussion of some of the chlorite seals of central Crete, see the section ‘Mesara Chlorite Prisms’, pp. 120–134; for chlorite seals with centred-circles, see especially p. 131.

⁵²⁷ On the chlorite seals for example, the patterns are often formed by motifs which do not coalesce into a unit. For some examples of such patterns, see footnote 526.

⁵²⁸ Compare for example **16 a** to **290 c**, **320 c**, **A.10 b**; **333 b** to **359 b**, **359 c**, **409 a**; **392 b** to **21 a**, **409 b**. For the Central Crete Ornamental Prisms, see pp. 148–159.

⁵²⁹ E.g. CMS II,2 no. 5 b; CMS II,5 nos. 12–14.

⁵³⁰ These prisms belong to Yule’s Hieroglyphic Deposit Group (for the group, see Yule 1980 a, 215–219).

⁵³¹ For these pieces, see also pp. 37, 68–70.

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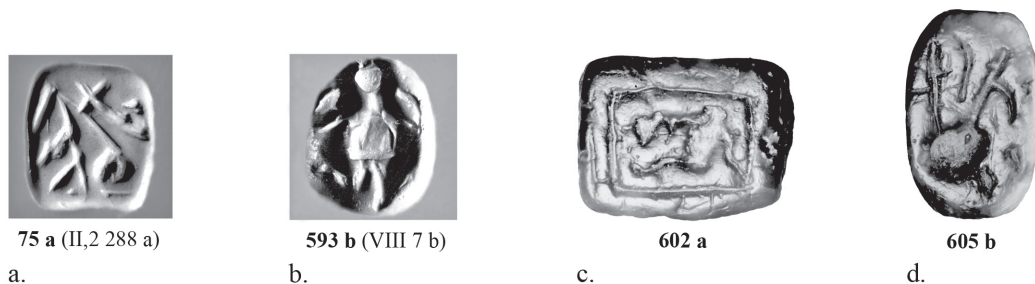


Fig. 45 Examples of indiosyncratic engraving on Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.

abrasive action after being cut with tools operated on the spindle.⁵³² The iconography, style, and material of the two pieces, which must have been cut at the same ‘workshop’, brings them close to hard stone hieroglyphic seals.⁵³³ Also belonging to the cluster is the pseudo-jasper stepped rectangular plate CMS II,2 no. 217 from ‘Gouves’ which is engraved with hieroglyphs on all sides.

Some pieces do not find iconographic or stylistic parallels among other seals of the group. One of them is **75** whose devices on two sides could represent hieroglyphic signs or attempts to imitate hieroglyphs (*fig. 45 a*).⁵³⁴ Another piece is **422** whose peculiar execution of the hieroglyphic signs on **422 a** and **422 b** raises doubts regarding its authenticity.⁵³⁵ Peculiar is the iconography and execution of the *Quatrefoil* **461 c**, the *Man in profile* and the *Agrimi* **602 a** and **602 b** respectively, the *Head of an agrimi* and the “*Bulb branch*” **605 b** and **605 c** respectively, and the overall synthesis on **A.16 c** (*fig. 45 c, d*). However, the existence on the other sides of these pieces of devices which are not foreign to the MM repertoire and style would seem to problematise any judgment of them as modern.⁵³⁶ Finally, neither the iconography nor the style of any of the seal faces of **439**, **593**, **A.11**, and **A.13** find good MM parallels (*fig. 45 b*). Nonetheless, the mediocre workmanship of these seals as well as the lack on some seal faces of clearly recognisable devices would speak against the hypothesis that they are forgeries.⁵³⁷

⁵³² For this subject, see pp. 37, also footnotes 189–191.

⁵³³ For this subject, see pp. 37, 68–70.

⁵³⁴ For the possibility of reading some devices as imitations of hieroglyphs, see pp. 355.

⁵³⁵ The execution of the intaglios on this piece could suggest that the stone is harder than steatite.

⁵³⁶ Compare for example the *Head of a ‘ram’* **605 a** to that on **19 c** and perhaps **312 b**; the composition **602 c** to those on **265 c** and **534 a**; the ‘*Spider*’ **461 b** to those on **414 a** and **580 b**; and the *Dog/lion* **A.16 a** to the same device on CMS II,2 no. 161.

⁵³⁷ E.g. the bad preservation of the image **593 c**. Also the unclear images **439 b**, **A.13 b**, **13 c**, **A.11 a–c**. Before reproving a seal as a forgery one should consider whether the labour for its manufacture would be worth its selling value. A modern three-sided prism would be engraved on all seal faces with devices of at least relatively good workmanship if it were to reach a price which would be worth the expense of its manufacture.

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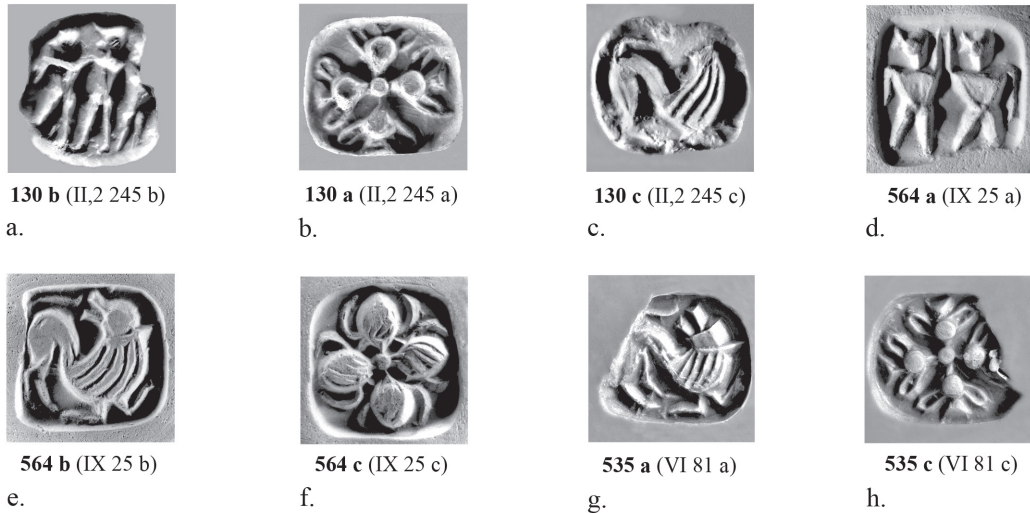


Fig. 46 Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms with similar iconography on two or three sides.

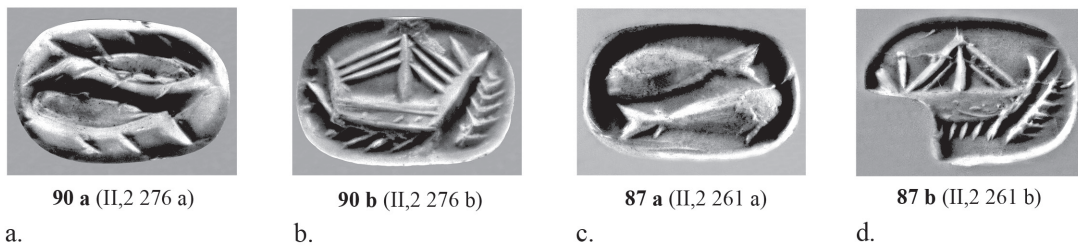


Fig. 47 Two stylistically different Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms with similar iconography on two sides.

ICONOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

Some pieces have similar iconography without being stylistically related. **91**, **130**, **535**, and **564**, for example, show on one seal face a *Cross of Amphorae* or a *Cross of Spiders* (fig. 46). One of the other sides of each piece bears a procession of *Men in profile* or a regardant crouching *Dog/lion*. Two of these pieces are engraved with these three images on their three sides (fig. 46 a–f).

Particularly striking is the similarity of the images of **87** and **90** which show on one side two fish/dolphins arranged in 180° rotational symmetry and on the other a *Ship* with a branch in front of it (fig. 47).

550 and **551** have a very similar form, are made of similar material, and display similar iconography (fig. 48). Their material is light olive green steatite, their seal faces are round or almost round and they are not surrounded by grooves. Two of their seal faces show

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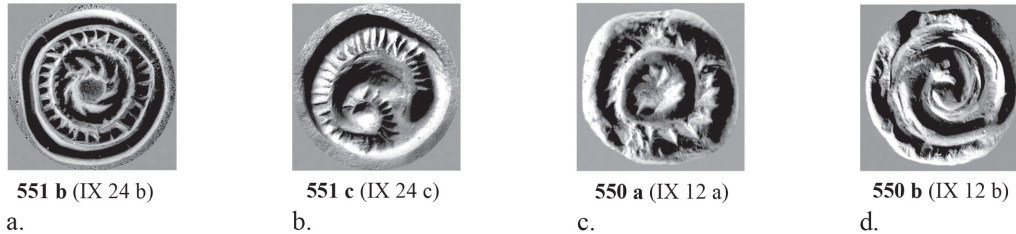


Fig. 48 Two stylistically different Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms with similar iconography on two sides.

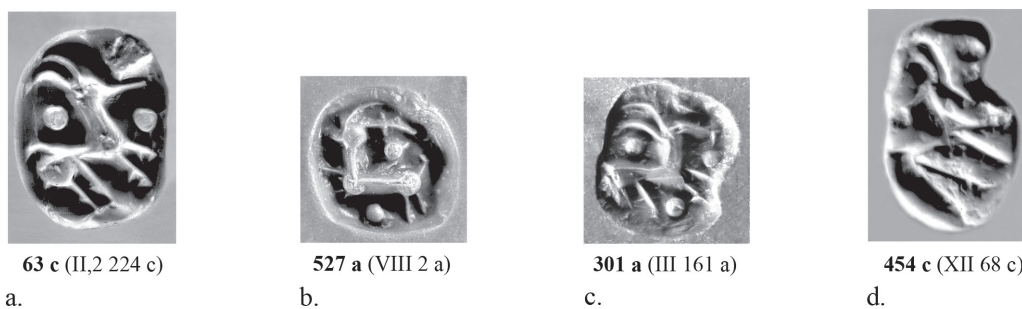


Fig. 49 Examples of stylistically different Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms which show an obliquely placed *Agrimi* on one seal face.

similar but not identical compositions. A *Whirl* enclosed in a *Border* with teeth on the outer side and a *Coil spiral* on **550 a** and **550 b** are comparable to a *Whirl* enclosed in a ladder band *Border* and a *Paisley* on **551 b** and **551 c**. The execution of the devices is different in that the intaglios of **551** are created by clear decisive cuts and show flat floors while with those of **550** multiple cuts and a considerable amount of correction are evident.

A larger cluster consists of pieces which show on one side an *Agrimi* placed obliquely on the seal face such that the underside of its chest and belly are placed opposite one of the ‘corners’ of the seal face (fig. 49).⁵³⁸ The animal is not always the only motif in the image as is shown by **347 a** where the *Agrimi* is combined with a seated *Man in profile*. Often two ‘cup sinkings’ flank the neck of the *Agrimi* or the *Back part of an arrow* penetrates its backside.⁵³⁹ In two cases, none of these motifs appears; instead, the animal stands alone or is surrounded by a *Border*.⁵⁴⁰ On the other seal faces, various devices are met but perhaps a preference for the depiction of a *Whirl*, two crouching *Dogs/lions* arranged in 180° rotational symmetry, and regardant *Bovines* with suckling kids can be noted.⁵⁴¹ The

⁵³⁸ **63**, **110**, **301**, **347**, **396**, **423**, **425**, **454**, **486**, **527**.

⁵³⁹ ‘Cup sinkings’: e.g. **63 c**, **301 a**, **396 a**, **527 a**. Back part of an arrow: e.g. **110 a**, **347 a**.

⁵⁴⁰ Standing alone: **486 c**. Surrounded by a *Border*: **425 c**.

⁵⁴¹ *Whirl*: e.g. **110 c**, **486 b**. Crouching *Dogs/lions*: e.g. **301 c**, **347 b**. Regardant *Bovines* with suckling kids: e.g. **347**

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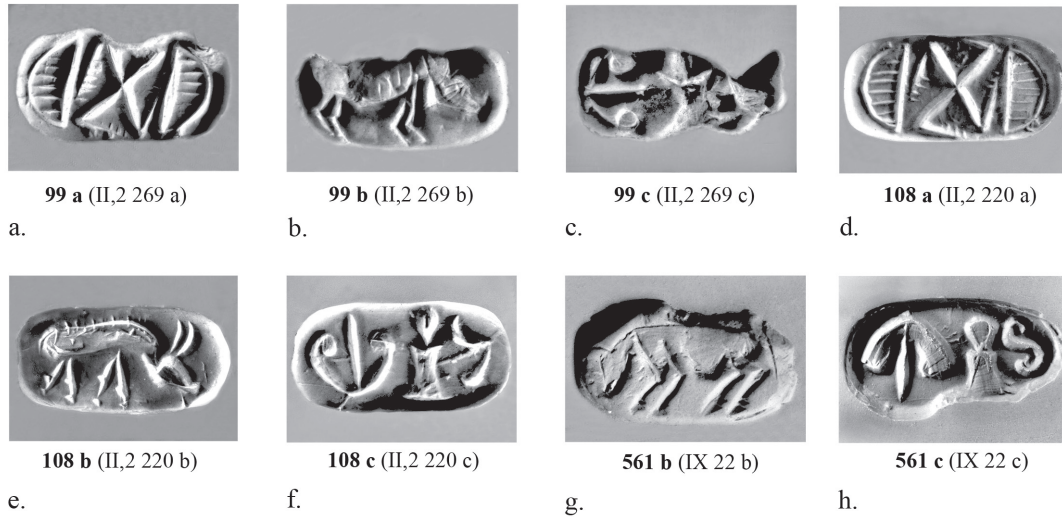


Fig. 50 Prisms combining on two or three sides the hieroglyphic inscription CHIC signs 044 – 049, a *Pig/boar*, and/or a *Swastika* flanked by *Hatched Ds*.

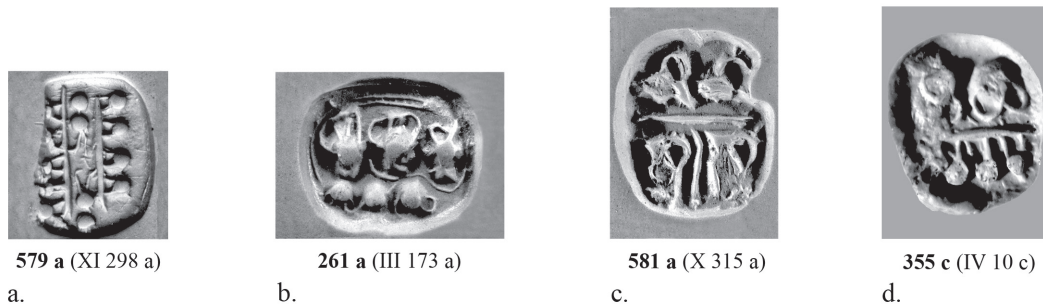


Fig. 51 Prisms with images composed of many devices.

iconography on the other sides of many of these pieces is comparable to that of prisms which come from the Malia Workshop.⁵⁴²

Noteworthy is the combination of the hieroglyphic inscription CHIC signs 044 – 049⁵⁴³ on one side of some pieces with a *Pig/boar* and/or a *Swastika* flanked by two *Hatched Ds* on one or two of the remaining seal faces (fig. 50).⁵⁴⁴

c, 425 b.

⁵⁴² Compare for example 110 c to 169 c; 301 b to 186 c, 191 c; 347 a to 190 b; 396 b to 203 a; 423 b to 190 c; 454 b to 146 a, 147 c; 486 a to 144 b.

⁵⁴³ “*Trowel*” and “*Arrow*” b.

⁵⁴⁴ E.g. 99, 108, 158, 561. These pieces are not stylistically dissimilar.

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On some prisms, a preference is shown for images composed of many figures such that as much as possible of the available space is covered (*fig. 51*).⁵⁴⁵ Whereas the iconography of these pieces is not homogeneous, a preference for the depiction of vessels and ‘*Poles*’ slung with ‘*String vessels*’, both devices very often combined with human figures, is immediately discernible. On many of these pieces, the use of drilled ‘cup sinkings’ is particularly favoured.

The use of templates, the copying of a device from one seal to another, the existence of ‘pattern books’, chance, or some symbolic significance in the combination of certain devices or images could perhaps explain some of the iconographic similarities discussed above.⁵⁴⁶

SEALS OF OTHER FORMS THAT BELONG TO THE SAME GROUP

A variety of seals of other forms show similar iconographic and stylistic traits as the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms and build with them the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group (*fig. 52*). Within this group, prisms represent 82 % and seals of other forms 18 % of the examples. Like the prisms, most of the other seals are cut in steatite, individual examples manufactured from other soft materials, such as other soft stones, bone, hippo ivory, and white paste, or from medium-hard stones constituting exceptions. All the pieces have flat seal faces and are cut in the same ways as the prisms of the group.

Among the other forms, most commonly met is the conoid, truncated or not, with Δ -, T-, or Π - perforation (*fig. 52 a–c*).⁵⁴⁷ The majority of conoids have decorated backs, mostly torsionally fluted but sometimes also ladder-incised, whereas examples with plain backsides are also met.⁵⁴⁸ Four-sided prisms, rectangular plates, and signets are also popular (*fig. 52 d–i*).⁵⁴⁹ Amongst the latter, Petschafte, i.e. signets with ‘distinctly articulated

⁵⁴⁵ 66, 166, 187, 227, 261, 273, 355, 366, 490, 502, 579, 581.

⁵⁴⁶ Since the subject of the combinations of the devices on the seal faces of a prism is not part of this study only a small number of pieces which show similar iconography on two or three sides have been presented. An exhaustive discussion of this subject would require systematic organisation and analysis of the iconographic data which appear on the three seal faces of a prism, a task which falls beyond the scope of this study. For the objectives of the present study, see pp. 1–2.

⁵⁴⁷ Unless otherwise stated the designation of the seal shapes follows Yule 1980 a, 24–117.

⁵⁴⁸ Torsionally fluted: CMS II,1 nos. 414 (Malia, Quartier E), 417 (‘Malia’), 418 (Malia, Chrysolakkos), 489; CMS II,2 nos. 96 (Malia, Workshop), 97 (Malia, Workshop), 142 (Malia, Workshop), 166 (Malia, Workshop), 173 (Malia, Workshop); CMS III nos. 40, 44 (‘Malia’); CMS IV no. 9 (‘Malia’); CMS VI no. 21; CMS VIII nos. 9, 10, 11, 12, 17; Bonner 1954, 142 no. 17; Poursat 1996, 104 no. HM 2524 (Malia, Workshop); Max Bernheimer 2007, 16 no. B-7 (?). Ladder-incised: CMS II,1 no. 409 (‘Malia’); CMS XII nos. 56, 57; Chapouthier 1946, 80 fig. 2 a (‘Malia’). Plain backside: CMS I no. 424; CMS II,1 nos. 410 (‘Malia’), 483 (‘Pseira’), 500; CMS II,2 no. 127 (Malia, Workshop); CMS III nos. 41 (‘Knossos’), 42 (‘Lasithi’), 45; CMS VI nos. 18, 20; CMS IX no. 6; CMS XII no. 21.

⁵⁴⁹ Four-sided prisms: CMS II,2 nos. 108 (Malia, Workshop), 153 (Malia, Workshop), 157 (Malia, Workshop), 185 (Malia, Workshop), 229 (‘Malia, Kefala’), 313; CMS III nos. 235 (‘Malia’), 239, 240 (‘Malia’); CMS IV no. 128 (‘Malia’); CMS IX no. 17; CMS X no. 52; CMS XII nos. 67, 70, 87; CMS XIII no. 46; Pelon 1965, 2 fig. 1 (Malia, Quartier E); Chapouthier 1946, 81 fig. 3 no. 7 (‘Malia’); CHIC no. 279; Poursat 1996, 104 nos. HM 2520 (Malia,

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Fig. 52 Other Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals.

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midsection',⁵⁵⁰ are markedly fewer.⁵⁵¹ Hemicylinders, half-conoids, hemispheroids, all with plain or decorated backs, as well as discs are found more sporadically (*fig. 52 j–m*).⁵⁵²

Workshop), HM 2521 (Malia, Workshop); Wiencke 1969, 34 no. 2; Yule 1980 b, 101 no. 17; CHIC no. 282 (Myrtos Pyrgos). Rectangular plates: CMS II,2 no. 240 (?) ('Malia'); CMS III nos. 63 ('Malia'), 64, 243 ('Malia'); CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 333 (Mochlos, Square to the east of House C. 1), 337 (Palaikastro, Building 4); CMS VI no. 25 ('Malia'); CMS XI no. 231 (?) (with one convex face). Also the rectangular plates with stepped sides CMS II,2 nos. 217 (pseudo-jasper [Walter Müller, pers. comm.], 'Gouves Pediados, Asprougas'), 315. The convex seal face of CMS XI no. 231 could speak against its classification with the group. On the other hand, the motif CMS XI no. 231 b is easily comparable to the motif on the seal face CMS XII no. 3D c which belongs to a steatite gable of the group. Two observations problematise the inclusion of CMS II,2 no. 240 within the group, namely the linear rendering of the scorpion CMS II,2 no. 240 b and the fact that the motif CMS II,2 no. 240 a finds no good stylistic parallels among the prisms.

⁵⁵⁰ Yule 1980 a, 85 no. 31 i–l Petschafte.

⁵⁵¹ Signets: CMS II,2 nos. 76 (Malia, Palace), 77 (Malia, Quartier Γ); CMS III no. 37; CMS IV no. 61 ('Malia'); CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 20 (Malia, Quartier N); CMS X no. 211 (in CMS X described as a button; for a photograph of the body of the seal, see the CMS Database); CMS XII nos. 80, 90; CMS XIII no. 2; Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 171–174 nos. 240–243, 176 no. 245 (all from Malia, Quartier M). Petschafte: CMS II,2 no. 333; CMS III nos. 59, 103, 112; CMS VI no. 136; CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 23 (Malia, Quartier N). The signets CMS II,2 no. 77 and Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 171 no. 240 stand out because of their large size as well as the ample and more plastically rendered bodies of the engraved figures. The size does not distance the two seals from the group since the similarly-shaped signet CMS II,2 no. 76, which clearly belongs to it, has similar dimensions. The technical execution of the intaglios of the two pieces finds some comparanda among the prisms. The plastic rendering of the body of the animal CMS II,2 no. 77 is comparable to that of the *Bull 269 c*. Whereas the intaglio of the former device is flatter, the bodies of both quadrupeds are created in a way which goes beyond the common practice of simply smoothing out the 'blanks'. The musculature of the animals is moulded within the intaglio such that more naturalistic motifs are created. The rendering of the animal on CMS II,2 no. 77 becomes even more expressive through the addition of slightly curving lines which represent the folds in the animal's skin. The body of the human figure Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 171 no. 240 is configured as a flat 'blank', but the curves of the outline as well as the rounder intaglio of the head create a more naturalistic impression than usual. The intaglio of the head in particular, is comparable to the deep rounded intaglio of the *Profile head of a 'bull' 115 a*. More to the point, the way in which the eye is rendered on the motifs of CMS II,2 no. 77 and Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 171 no. 240 finds a parallel in the eye of the *Profile head of a 'bull' 115 a*. Both CMS II,2 no. 77 and **115** come from Quartier Γ in Malia and could well be contemporaneous. The relationship of the signet CMS XII no. 73 to the group is uncertain. The *Pig/boar* CMS XII no. 73 finds good iconographic parallels among the same animals on the prisms, but the placement of a *Line comb* above it does not. The rounder intaglio is very probably connected with the greater hardness of the stone (serpentine [?]) which would require more chafing than steatite. The piece is not included in the group on account of its large dimensions (seal face diam. 2,8 cm) and its unusual material. However, a relationship with it cannot be ruled out.

⁵⁵² Hemicylinders, plain back: CMS II,2 nos. 80 (Malia, Quartier Δ, House β), 141 (Malia, Workshop). Hemicylinders, decorated back: CMS II,2 nos. 135 (Malia, Workshop), 161 (Malia, Workshop), 239 ('Malia'); CMS IV nos. 129 ('Malia'); Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 166–167 no. 236 (Malia, Quartier M). Hemicylinders, configuration of the back unknown: CMS II,2 no. 112 (Malia, Workshop). The broad torsion flutes which decorate the back of the steatite CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 24 and its device which is composed of circles distance the piece from the group. Devices composed of circles are not represented on soft stone prisms but are characteristic of MM hard stone seals (for this subject and for some examples of such devices on hard stone seals, see p. 109; the only prism which shows a device composed of circles is **440 [440 a]** which is cut in breccia). The device CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 24 differs from those cut in medium-hard and hard stone seals in that it is engraved freehand. It seems possible that

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Planoconvex seals, gables with three engraved sides, and foliate backs are rarer (*fig. 52 n,o*).⁵⁵³ Individual examples of a scarab, a scaraboid, a seal in the shape of a frog (?), a seal in the shape of intertwined animal foreparts, a cube, a pyramidoid, a wedge, a triangular plate, and an ellipsoidal plate are also represented.⁵⁵⁴ Finally, two reels seem somewhat close to the prisms of the group, but also show elements which do not allow them to be definitively classified with the former.⁵⁵⁵

the piece was initially covered by gold sheet, as is the case with the similar-shaped CMS III no. 100. Half-conoids, plain back: CMS III no. 54 ('Mirampelo'). Half-conoids, decorated back: CMS II,2 no. 318; CMS VIII no. 8. Half-conoids, configuration of the back unknown: Christie's 1989, 26 no. 31. Hemispheroids, plain back: CMS II,1 no. 415 (Malia, Quartier E). Hemispheroids, decorated back: CMS III no. 79 (whitish paste, 'Malia'); CMS VII no. 210; CMS XII no. 85. Despite the unusual material of CMS III no. 79, iconography, cutting technique, and provenance support its classification with the group. Its motif, a *Star pommée*, finds good parallels with the devices **271 c** and CMS II,1 no. 415. Worth noting is that CMS II,1 no. 271, a chlorite signet which shows a similar motif, albeit one with no central cup sinking, is not associated with the group. In this case, material and provenance of the seal (Mesara) place it in the glyptic tradition of south-central Crete. Discs: CMS I no. 420; CMS III nos. 114 ('Knossos'), 115 (?) ('Malia'); CMS V nos. 27 (?) (Vasiliki), 28; CMS VI no. 158 (?). The devices of CMS III no. 115, CMS V no. 27, and CMS VI no. 158 find only some iconographic parallels among the prisms (the device on CMS III no. 115 a is a *Centipede*, that on CMS V no. 27 is a *Crab* [?], that on CMS VI no. 158 a is a 'Frog' [?]).

⁵⁵³ Planoconvex seals: CMS II,1 no. 487 (with stringhole channel vertical to the back of the seal, 'Elounta'); CMS II,2 no. 32 (without stringhole channel, Knossos, Palace [?]); Poursat 1996, 104 HM 2653 (Malia, Workshop); HMS 2405 with three engraved sides (Malia, Zouria [unpublished, courtesy of the Heraklion Museum. I wish to thank Nota Dimopoulou Rethemiotaki and Athanasia Kanta for the permission to include the piece in my study]). Perhaps also CMS I no. 28? The term *planoconvex seal* is borrowed from the designation of the seal forms in the CMS Database. Gables with three engraved sides: CMS II,2 no. 312; CMS XII no. 3D; Demargne 1939, 122 fig. 1 ('Malia'). Foliate backs: CMS III no. 96; CMS VI no. 150; Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 180 no. 251 (?) (Malia, Quartier M). Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 180 no. 251 is not made of steatite but of a whitish soft stone (according to its publication, limestone [Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 180]). The intaglio is shallower, rounder, and softer than the typical intaglios of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms, a difference which could be attributed to the different texture of the stone. The animal finds a distant parallel among the prisms on the *Octopus* **422 c**. However, this motif is engraved on a prism whose originality can be disputed (for this subject, see p. 100). The rendering of the eyes of the creature can be compared to that of the eyes of the masks **420 b** and **584 b**. The small *Saltire* under the animal, connected by Poursat to the CHIC sign X, could be taken as a further indication of the proximity of the piece to the group. A similar association of a small *Saltire* with a representational device is found on **461 a**. The curved line to the right of the animal functions as a filler, a feature which is typical of the compositions on the prisms. These iconographic observations in combination with the fact that the piece comes from Quartier Mu suggest some proximity to the group.

⁵⁵⁴ CMS III no. 26; CMS VI no. 151 (?); CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 40 (Agios Charalampos, Ossuary Cave); CMS IV no. 26D ('Siteia'); CMS III no. 62 ('Malia'); CMS VII no. 32; CMS II,2 no. 152 (Malia, Workshop); Chapouthier 1946, 80 fig. 2 b ('Malia'); CMS II,2 no. 99 (Malia, Workshop).

⁵⁵⁵ CMS III no. 119; CMS VI no. 122 (?) ('Siteia' [town], not steatite). CMS III no. 119 combines a device which is often seen on prisms with an iconographic element not met there. The quatrefoil CMS III no. 119 a is created by the juxtaposition of two twayblades arranged with regard to reflection symmetry. Twayblades are not met on prisms but are frequent on EM III/MM I seals (e.g. CMS II,1 nos. 379, 385 a, 387; CMS IV nos. 27 a, 103 b, 107, 112; Chatzi Vallianou 1987, pl. 192 b). On the other hand, the image of a *Whirl* surrounded by a ladder band *Border* on CMS III no. 119 b is common on prisms (compare for example **169 c**, **551 b**; for a similar executed *Whirl*, see **550 a**). This, as well as the fact that ladder band *Borders* are typical of the Malia Eastern/Crete Steatite Group could suggest a relation of the piece to the latter. CMS VI no. 122 is engraved freehand on a soft stone which could, according to

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SEALS CLOSE TO THE MALIA/EASTERN CRETE STEATITE GROUP BUT ENGRAVED WITH TOOLS MOUNTED ON THE HORIZONTAL SPINDLE

Of particular interest is the fact that some of the devices and images met on seals of this group are very rare or not encountered at all on hard stone MM seals.⁵⁵⁶ This is the case for example with the 'Poles' slung with 'String vessels', the 'Man with semicircular body', and the 'pictographic' images. However, some MM medium-hard or hard stone seals with flat seal faces cut with tools operated on the spindle show very similar iconography to the seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group (fig. 53). These probably constitute attempts of the engravers of the group to carve harder materials employing the horizontal spindle.

Breccia, pseudo-jasper, rock crystal, agate, banded cornelian, and fluorite are employed for the manufacture of these seals. Three-sided prisms and truncated conoids with torsionally fluted back and Δ -perforation are most frequently represented.⁵⁵⁷ A planoconvex seal, a seal in the shape of intertwined animal foreparts, and a duck-shaped seal also show similar iconography.⁵⁵⁸

CMS VI, be of Cycladic origin. Its iconography is, to a certain extent, reminiscent of that of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms (compare the device on side b to the type *Head of a 'ram'*). Its intaglios are very deep and rounded such that no outline walls are discerned. Peculiar is the adjustment of the head of the animal on CMS VI no. 122 b to the round seal face in such a way that the horns and the upper part of the head form a tight curve. Boardman refers to a small group of Bronze Age seals cut on a Cycladic soft stone which was very popular in archaic times for the manufacture of seals (Boardman 1970, 60). He mentions two LBA examples of what he believes to be such seals. Their intaglios are described as showing 'rounded lumpy cutting', a characterisation which would also fit the engraving of the piece in question. On these grounds, the piece could perhaps be seen as a MBA seal made on the islands (shape and iconography of the seal are better placed in the MBA). Turning to other seals, the steatite stamp cylinder CMS VII no. 20 shows on side a a badly executed scorpion and on side b an inadequately preserved motif which does not provide any clue towards the better understanding of the piece. For that reason, the seal is not included in the group. Characteristic of a group of seals are devices or compositions created by 'cup sinkings' and lines. Represented among them are small stamp cylinders (CMS III nos. 33, 46; Detournay – Poursat – Vandennebeele 1980, 167 no. 237), truncated pyramids (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 238; CMS XI no. 67), truncated conoids (CMS III no. 47), and elongated conoids (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 237), the last three with diametric perforations. The compositions of these pieces do not show any characteristic features which can connect them to or distance them from the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group. While truncated pyramids are a mainly Prepalatial shape (Yule 1980, 69), the other shapes are also met in later periods (Yule 1980, 43, 91). In any case, the small size of the stamp cylinders distances them from the larger early hippo ivory stamp cylinders. Detournay – Poursat – Vandennebeele 1980, 167 no. 237 was found in Quartier Mu in Malia but Poursat regards it on account of its form to be earlier than its MM IIB context (Poursat in Detournay – Poursat – Vandennebeele 1980, 189).

⁵⁵⁶ For more on this subject, see the section 'Images exclusive to soft stone glyptic', pp. 356–358.

⁵⁵⁷ Three-sided prisms, breccia: CMS II,2 nos. 150, 168; CMS XII no. 94. Three-sided prisms, pseudo-jasper: CMS II,2 no. 79; Chapouthier 1932, 185 no. 3 (?) (the stone is described by Chapouthier as hard steatite, but both the fact that steatite is always soft and the wide use of 'cup sinkings' and lines with tapering edges would suggest a medium-hard or hard stone engraved with fast motion tools). Three-sided prisms, rock crystal: CMS III no. 181. Three-sided prisms, cornelian: CMS XII no. 93. Truncated conoids, pseudo-jasper (?): CMS II,1 no. 412. Truncated conoids, rock crystal: CMS II,1 no. 468; CMS III no. 43; van Effenterre 1980, 568 fig. 839.

⁵⁵⁸ Planoconvex seal: Poursat 1996, 105 no. 2655 bis (fluorite). Seal in the shape of intertwined animal foreparts: CMS IX no. 32 (agate). Duck-shaped seal: CMS VI no. 139 (agate).

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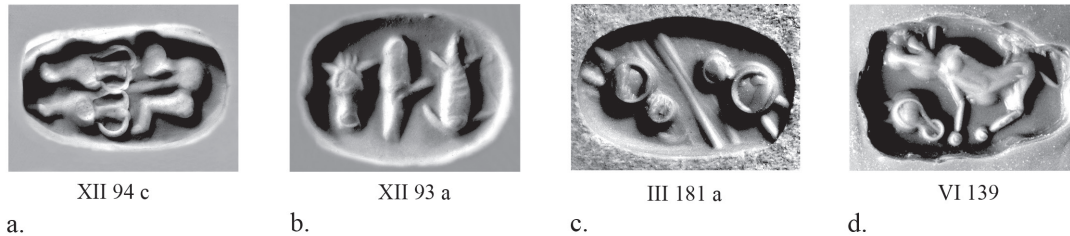


Fig. 53 Seals engraved in the horizontal spindle with iconography reminiscent of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals.

On such seals, ‘cup sinkings’ and crescents are very commonly used as elements of the motifs. Vessels with spherical bodies and crescent-shaped handles for example are created by the combination of these elements.⁵⁵⁹ Such vessels on CMS XII no. 93 c and a synthesis reminiscent of images met on the prisms on CMS XII no. 93 a are combined with a device composed of interlacing circles and crescents on CMS XII no. 93 b. Ornamental devices put together from perfect circles are characteristic of the first hard stone seals.⁵⁶⁰ The combination on CMS XII no. 93 of such a device with compositions characteristic of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group attests to the mutual influence exerted by the MM soft stone and hard stone glyptic on each other. The appearance of this device on CMS XII no. 93 links it to a small group of hard stone seals which show either representational devices, somewhat reminiscent of the ones encountered on the prisms, combined with circles in one image; or devices composed of interlacing circles.⁵⁶¹

SEALINGS OF THE MALIA/EASTERN CRETE STEATITE GROUP

Only seven seal impressions on clay objects can be attributed with certainty to seals of the group (*fig. 54*).⁵⁶² Of the six sealings from Quartier Mu in Malia which can be associated

⁵⁵⁹ E.g. CMS IX no. 32.

⁵⁶⁰ Such a device is only met once on a prism, on **444 a**. **444** is made of breccia, a stone which is placed halfway between soft material and hard stone engraving (for the use of medium-hard stones for the manufacture of prisms, see pp. 36–37).

⁵⁶¹ Representational devices combined with circles in one image: e.g. CMS III nos. 20, 22, 27, 102; CMS VI no. 144. Devices composed of interlacing circles: e.g. CMS III no. 21; CMS IV no. 133.

⁵⁶² The attribution of a sealing to a Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seal is done on the basis of iconography, cutting technique, and configuration of the seal face (curvature, size). However, very often style cannot be readily assessed from clay impressions. Clay does not always penetrate so deep in the intaglios that the exact technical execution of the original intaglio can be made out. This is made obvious by a comparison of the two impressions of CMS II,5 no. 287 (CMS, lower photograph). While in the lower impression the body of the animal shows a flat relief, a feature which would suggest that it was created by a board-like ‘blank’, in the higher impression it is rounder and more plastically rendered. This proves that the original intaglio was actually softer. Because of this difficulty, the

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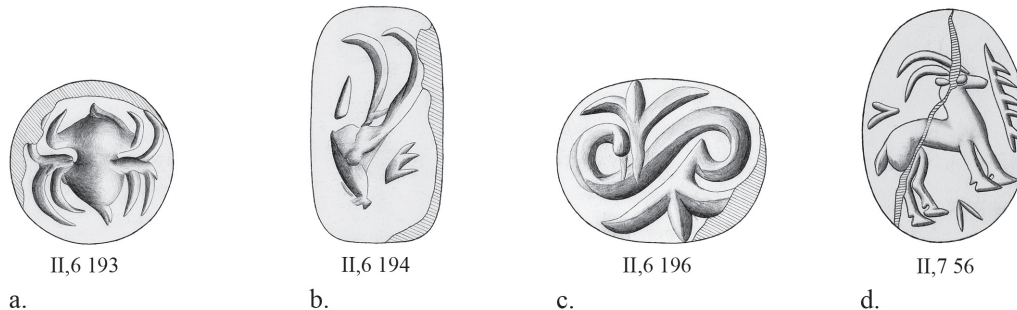


Fig. 54 Sealings impressed by Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals.

with the group, four can be connected to it with confidence.⁵⁶³ Definitely impressed by a Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seal is also a sealing which comes from the north eastern border area of the Malia Palace.⁵⁶⁴

Out of three sealings which seem close to the group from Kato Zakros, one can be associated with it with certainty.⁵⁶⁵ Three further possible cases come from Knossos, one from Petras, and another from Palaikastro.⁵⁶⁶ Turning to southern Crete, two sealings

attribution of many impressions to the group is undertaken mainly on account of iconographic criteria. However, the fact that similar compositions are often met on early bone/hippo ivory seals, on seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group, and on some MM hard stone seals, all of which show flat seal faces, makes the inclusion of impressions to the group on the basis of iconography alone possible only with a certain degree of reservation.

⁵⁶³ CMS II,6 nos. 192, 183 (?), 189 (?), 193, 194, 196. The CMS considers that CMS II,6 no. 183 was impressed by a hard stone intaglio. While it is true that the impressed intaglio was precisely worked, its considerable depth could suggest that it belonged to a steatite four-sided seal of high quality similar to CMS II,2 no. 315, CMS III no. 235, CMS X no. 52, Pelon 1965, 2 fig. 1 or to a medium-hard stone seal which was cut freehand such as CMS II,2 no. 217 (for a discussion of such seals, see pp. 68–70; for prisms with similar compositions and intaglios, see **353** and **457**). Also the facts that the inscription of CMS II,6 no. 183 is met more than once on prisms (**3 b**, **89 b**, **434 c**, **457 c**), that the position of the two triangular fillers finds parallels in the images **3 b** and **525 b**, and that the 'Fir branch' encountered on this seal face is a common motif on seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group could support the hypothesis that the original intaglio belonged to a seal of this group. The somewhat rounded intaglio of CMS II,6 no. 189 could have belonged to both a soft stone as well as a hard stone seal. The CMS sees a soft stone intaglio also on CMS II,6 no. 187. However, a comparison of the *Head of an agrimi* with the same motif on the hard stone instances CMS VI no. 124 and CMS IV no. 141 would suggest a hard stone intaglio for CMS II,6 no. 187. Noteworthy is the iconographic and stylistic similarity of **353 a** and CMS II,6 no. 168. Despite this, the rounded relief of the latter would rather suggest that it was impressed by a hard stone intaglio.

⁵⁶⁴ CMS II,6 no. 214.

⁵⁶⁵ CMS II,6 no. 166 (?); CMS II,7 nos. 56, 214 (?). While technical execution and iconography of CMS II,6 no. 166 could point to a seal of the group, the large dimensions of the vessel with regard to the seal face are unusual. The state of preservation of CMS II,7 no. 214 does not allow ruling out the possibility that the intaglio belonged to a hard stone seal.

⁵⁶⁶ Knossos: CMS II,8 nos. 36 (?), 39 (?), 81 (?). Despite the fact that the CMS attributes CMS II,8 nos. 36 and 39 to hard stone seals, their relatively high relief could be taken as an indication of the use of the blade. Also the relatively

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from Phaistos and two from Monastiraki show iconographic elements characteristic of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals.⁵⁶⁷ Finally, the iconography and technical execution of a rectangular impression with unknown provenance kept at the Heraklion Museum allow it to be securely associated with these seals.⁵⁶⁸

high relief of CMS II,8 no. 81 and the fact that one device is an outline motif could be taken as indicative of a soft stone intaglio. The composition of CMS II,8 no. 8 is easily comparable to that on **226 a** and that of the steatite four-sided prism Pelon 1965, 2 fig. 1 b although none of these latter examples shows a ladder band *Border*. Despite the fact that the shape and size of the seal face would match a prism, the great sharpness of the engraving has led the authors of CMS II,8 to the conclusion that the seal was made rather of bone/hippo ivory (Ingo Pini, pers. comm.). The fine execution of the ladder border, its narrowness, and the slanting inner hatching are indeed reminiscent of the borders which are encountered on EM III/MM I hippo ivory seals (compare for example CMS II,1 nos. 64 b, 64 e; CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 34 a; but also the stone seal CMS II,1 no. 303). The slanting lines on either side of the shaft of the double axe on CMS II,8 no. 55 suggest that it was impressed by a hard stone intaglio (for this subject, see footnote 191). Petras: CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 329 (?). The intaglio is likely to have belonged to a soft stone seal because outline motifs are more common to soft than hard stone seals (e.g. the *Double axe* **184 c**). Palaikastro: CMS II,6 no. 244 (?). While the engraved image is comparable to that on **361 b**, the large dimensions of the intaglio also invite comparison with CMS II,8 no. 32 which is set apart from the group on account of its composition and the fact that it was impressed by a large circular seal face.

⁵⁶⁷ Phaistos: CMS II,5 nos. 248 (?), 326 (?). The body of the vessel CMS II,5 no. 248 seems to have a flat surface, a feature which could suggest a 'blank' with flat floor. While the iconography of CMS II,5 no. 326 connects it to the group, its state of preservation does not allow any assessment of the exact technical execution of the intaglios. Despite the fact that the iconography of CMS II,5 nos. 232, 238–240, 241, 247 does not find exact parallels among seals of the group, it would also not be incongruent with the iconography represented on its seals (regarding CMS II,5 no. 238, compare **362 b** and **510 a**). However, the rounded reliefs of the devices could be taken as indicative of hard stone intaglios. The execution of the double axe on CMS II,5 no. 231 and its curving outlines are similar to the same motif on **353 a**, a device which could be copied from or imitate a hard stone intaglio. Like CMS II,8 no. 55, also CMS II,5 no. 231 would probably have belonged to a hard stone intaglio (for CMS II,8 no. 55, see footnote 566; for **353**, see pp. 37, 68–70). The quadruped CMS II,5 no. 287 is iconographically similar to the *Pigs/boars* of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms but the pose of the animal is only met once in connection with them (see the *Bovines* **22 b**). On the other hand, this pose is characteristic of devices carved on the Mesara seals (for walking animals with one front leg stretched and raised at right or 45° angles, see especially CMS II,1 no. 64 d; also CMS II,1 nos. 64 c, 253, 295 b and the *Agrimi* on the chlorite prism **101 c**). This observation, as well as the row of the chevrons above the quadruped distance the piece from the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group. Monastiraki: Kanta 1999, pl. LXXXIV Mo 499 left (?), Mo 579 right (?). The two sealings are included in the group only on the basis of their iconography. The image on Kanta 1999, pl. LXXXIV Mo 579 right is comparable to those on **549 b** and CMS X no. 211. CMS V no. 290 shows a *Cross pommée with 'Lily flowers' as angle supplements*, a device which is very often met on prisms. However, in the Monastiraki sealing the design is executed with great accuracy and the relief is softer than the intaglios of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals. These elements in combination with the round seal face distance the piece from the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group and bring it close to another group of seals in which belong also the Petschafte Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 174 no. 244 and 176 no. 247 from Quartier Mu (compare the shapes and round seal faces of these seals to Detournay – Poursat – Vandenabeele 1980, 176 no. 246, 178 no. 248).

⁵⁶⁸ CMS II,6 no. 281. Despite the high relief of CMS II,6 no. 230 from Myrtos Pyrgos, its iconography would suggest a hard stone intaglio (compare for example CMS VI no. 141). Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellaraki suggest that CMS II,6 no. 151 from Archanes could have been impressed by a Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prism (Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellaraki 1997, 690). However, the voluminous body of the animal, the plastic rendering of its buttocks,

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DISTRIBUTION

The majority of the find places of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms with secure provenance are located in east-central and eastern Crete (*fig. 55 a*). Only two find spots are situated outside this area, both in the eastern Mesara. Having produced 87 % of the examples, Malia stands out as a major production centre of these prisms. The remaining 12 % come from other places in east-central and eastern Crete whereas 1 % come from the Mesara.

The image does not change significantly when the pieces with uncertain provenance are also considered (*fig. 55 b*). A thick clustering of find places is observed in the neighbourhood of Malia and on the Lasithi Plateau whereas many new find spots are added to the eastern part of the island. New find places are also seen in the Mesara, whereas some recovery spots appear in the Heraklion – Knossos area and in the west-central part of the island. Two pieces are said to have come from Egypt. The distribution ratios remain similar: 70 % of the prisms with provenance from Crete⁵⁶⁹ have been recovered in Malia, 24 % in other places in east-central and eastern Crete, 4 % in the Mesara, and 2 % in central and west-central Crete.

Pieces of other shapes with secure provenance have come to light in Knossos, Malia, Agios Charalampos, Myrtos Pyrgos, Mochlos, Palaikastro, and perhaps Vasiliki. Also in this case, 86.5 % of the examples come from Malia, 11.5 % from other places in east-central and eastern Crete, and 2 % from Knossos. When pieces with uncertain provenance are also considered, Pseira, Gouves,⁵⁷⁰ Elounta, and the town of Siteia are the find spots

its loop-forming tail, and its pose are not paralleled on *Dogs/lions* of this group. On the other hand, such tails are met on lions of hippo ivory seals (e.g. the lions CMS II,1 nos. 225 a, 249). As already noted by Vlazaki – Hallager, the engraved image on CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 323 from Chamaleuri finds good parallels among some images on bone/hippo ivory Prepalatial seals (e.g. CMS II,1 nos. 127, 272) (Vlazaki – Hallager 1995, 260). Myrtos Pyrgos, Gournia, and Malia have yielded some round impressions with diameters larger than 1.40 cm which show very similar iconography with the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals but whose dimensions and shape suggest that they were impressed by bone/hippo ivory seals (CMS II,6 nos. 155, 219, 220, 226). The seals that impressed these pieces are envisaged as belonging to the same group as CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 304 whose engraved image could, were it not for the shape and material of the seal, easily be mistaken as belonging to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group. The slightly slanting hatching of the ladder band border of the Gournia impression (CMS II,6 no. 155) would also suggest a bone/hippo ivory intaglio (for this subject, see footnote 596). More to the point, the round faces of the two impressions from Malia (CMS II,6 nos. 219, 220) and the fact that one is only 1 mm smaller than the other would support the idea that they constitute the two faces of a stamp cylinder. The combination of representational motifs on one seal face with ornamental devices composed of parallel strands to the other is often encountered on hippo ivory seals, such as the CMS II,1 nos. 64, 138, 442 (for a combination of such ornamental devices with representational motifs in one image, see CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 263 a). Furthermore, the combination of numerous blobs with a border and a predator animal on CMS II,6 no. 220 could be compared to the, admittedly different, image on CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 34 a which belongs to a hippo ivory stamp cylinder.

⁵⁶⁹ The information regarding the provenance of 54 % of the prisms is either unknown or very general, such as ‘Crete’ or ‘Egypt’.

⁵⁷⁰ Pediados.

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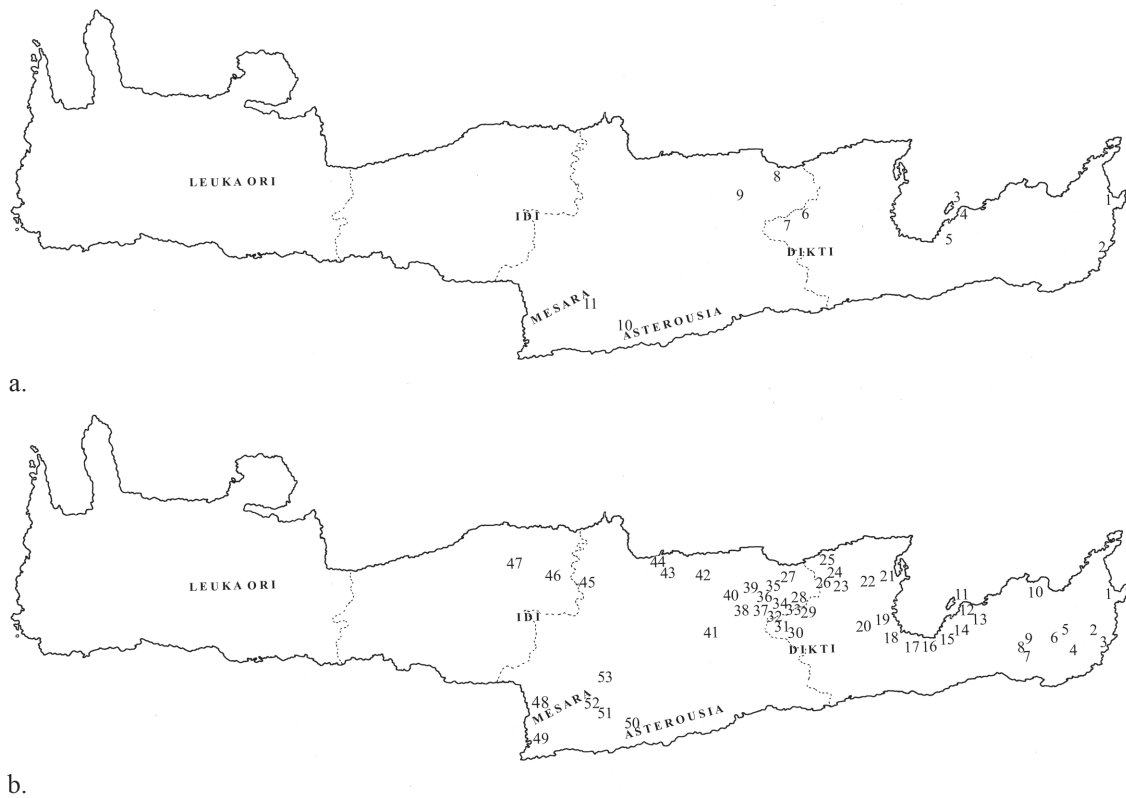


Fig. 55 Distribution of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms: a. find places of prisms with secure provenance: 1. Palaikastro; 2. Kato Zakros; 3. Pseira; 4. Mochlos; 5. Kavousi; 6. Trapeza; 7. Agios Charalampos; 8. Malia; 9. Smari; 10. Koumasa; 11. Platanos. b. find places of prisms with secure and uncertain provenance: 1. Palaikastro; 2. Epano Zakros; 3. Kato Zakros; 4. Lamnoni; 5. Sitanos; 6. Nea Praisos; 7. Lithines; 8. Adromyloi; 9. Sykia; 10. Siteia; 11. Pseira; 12. Mochlos; 13. Tourloti; 14. Lastros; 15. Kavousi; 16. Pacheia Ammos; 17. Gournia; 18. Koprana; 19. Lato i Etera; 20. Kritsa; 21. Elounta; 22. Kasteli; 23. Neapoli; 24. Anaulochos; 25. Milatos; 26. Vrachasi; 27. Malia; 28. Krasi; 29. Trapeza; 30. Psychro; 31. Agios Charalampos; 32. Kato Metochi; 33. Pinakiano; 34. Gonies; 35. Mochos; 36. Avdou; 37. Askoi; 38. Kasteli; 39. Potamies; 40. Smari; 41. Choumeri; 42. Artsa; 43. Knossos; 44. Heraklion; 45. Gonies; 46. Axos; 47. Choumeri; 48. Kamilari; 49. Moni Odigitria; 50. Koumasa; 51. Apesokari; 52. Platanos; 53. Gortys.

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added. Again, 80 % of the pieces with a provenance⁵⁷¹ were recovered in Malia, 15 % in other places in east-central and eastern Crete, and 4 % in Knossos. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that among those forms most abundantly represented, truncated conoids with decorated back, signets, hemicylinders, and with one exception four-sided prisms,⁵⁷² come exclusively from Malia.

A similar situation is encountered on considering the distribution of the clay impressions which can be attributed to seals of the group. 83 % of the sealings associated with it with certainty have been recovered at Malia, the rest coming from eastern Crete.⁵⁷³ When sealings which cannot be connected to the group with certainty are also considered, 37 % of the pieces come from Malia, 26 % from other places in east-central and eastern Crete, 21 % from south-central Crete, and 16 % from north-central Crete.⁵⁷⁴

The disproportionately large amount of Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals recovered in Malia points to this town as one of the most important, if not the most important centre of production of these seals.⁵⁷⁵ The distribution of the remaining seals suggests that the remaining centres of production for these seals were also located in east-central and eastern Crete. Most probably, pieces found outside these regions constitute imports from the eastern part of the island.

DATING

One prism is reported to have been found in a tomb used from EM III–MM I.⁵⁷⁶ Nine pieces have been recovered in contexts in which either predominantly MM I but also later MM or mainly MM II pottery has come to light.⁵⁷⁷ The majority of prisms come from the MM IIB destruction layer of Quartier Mu.⁵⁷⁸ Finally, one piece comes from a possible LM I, another from a LM I, a third from a LM IB, and a fourth from a LM IIIA2/B context.⁵⁷⁹

No seal of any other form comes from a context earlier than MM II. Also in this case, the majority of pieces come from the MM IIB destruction layer of Quartier Mu.⁵⁸⁰ A four-sided

⁵⁷¹ The provenance of 42 % of the seals of other forms is unknown.

⁵⁷² CHIC no. 282 (Myrtos Pyrgos).

⁵⁷³ The rest is represented by one piece which comes from Kato Zakros.

⁵⁷⁴ East-central and eastern Crete: Kato Zakros, Petras, Palaikastro. South-central Crete: Phaistos, Monastiraki. North-central Crete: Knossos.

⁵⁷⁵ Of the seals with provenance, 73 % come from Malia, 22 % from eastern Crete, 3 % from the Mesara, and 2 % from central and west-central Crete. The provenance of 51 % of the seals of the group is unknown.

⁵⁷⁶ **86.**

⁵⁷⁷ **8, 9, 78, 89, 129, 218, 219, 259, 260.**

⁵⁷⁸ **7, 138–209, 220, 222–224, 226, 228–235, 238, 247, 248, 251, 253, 256.**

⁵⁷⁹ Possible LM I context: **1**. LM I context: **A.21**. LM IB context: **577**. LM IIIA2/B context: **2**.

⁵⁸⁰ CMS II,2 nos. 96, 97, 108, 127, 142, 153, 157, 166, 173, 185; Detournay – Poursat – Vandenaebelle 1980, 166–167 no. 236, 171 no. 240, 172–174 no. 243, 176 no. 245, 180 no. 251.

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prism was recovered in a late MM III context and two rectangular plates were found in LM I contexts.⁵⁸¹ A Petschaft comes from a LM IIIB context.⁵⁸²

The large number of examples recovered in Quartier Mu suggest that these seals reached their floruit in MM II. The fact that most pieces were found in the MM IIB destruction layer would presuppose the use of such seals for some time before the disaster. Given the fact that **86** is the only piece reported to come from a pottery context no later than MM I and the large number of seals of the group which come from MM II contexts, it would seem reasonable to suppose that the tomb where the piece was found was used also in the MM II period. This would also be supported by the recovery in it of the cushion CMS II,1 no. 146. The shape and cutting technique of this piece would speak against a dating earlier than MM II.⁵⁸³

The prospect that most pieces found in contexts later than MM IIB were heirlooms or chance LM finds is very likely. On the other hand, considering the fact that artefacts do not cease to be manufactured instantly after the time of their acme, it is possible that individual pieces from later contexts could be of a somewhat later manufacture than MM IIB. Due to the lack of any Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals from contexts later than LM I, this possibility can be ruled out for **2** and V Suppl. 3 no. 23 which come from LM III contexts. These pieces would have certainly been either heirlooms or chance Postpalatial finds.⁵⁸⁴

PRISMS WITH EM III/MM I INFLUENCES

The material, iconography, and cutting technique of **7**, **23**, **98**, **160**, and **399** are to a great extent similar to those of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms (*fig. 56*).⁵⁸⁵ In a broader sense, these pieces are actually a cluster of this group. However, they are handled separately because they show some iconographic influences from EM III/MM I glyptic which allow for the possibility of a somewhat earlier dating than MM II.

A preference for internally hatched motifs is seen on **98** from ‘Gouves’ and **160** from the Malia Workshop (*fig. 56 a, b*).⁵⁸⁶ **160**, whose iconography connects it to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms but perhaps also to the hippo ivory seals of Sbonias’s Lions/Spiral Group and Leaves/Ivory Group, has already been discussed.⁵⁸⁷

Turning to **98**, its gable-shaped form could suggest earlier influences.⁵⁸⁸ More to the point, the composition on **98 c** brings to mind the parading lions often encountered on

⁵⁸¹ MM III context: Pelon 1965, 2 fig. 1. LM I contexts: CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 333, 337.

⁵⁸² CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 23 from Malia, Quartier N.

⁵⁸³ For examples of other such cushions, see CMS II,1 no. 5; CMS II,2 no. 200; CMS III no. 147.

⁵⁸⁴ A MM construction was discovered under the LM IIIA2/B building (V Suppl. 3, 96).

⁵⁸⁵ For the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms, see pp. 63–115.

⁵⁸⁶ For the fishbone pattern in the chest of the figure **160 a**, see footnote 396.

⁵⁸⁷ Pp. 71–72.

⁵⁸⁸ While a few Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Gables with three engraved sides are also met, the shape is more often encountered in connection with EM III/MM I seals (e.g. the MM I seals CMS II,1 no. 389; CMS II,2 nos. 207, 215, 310; CMS VI no. 14).

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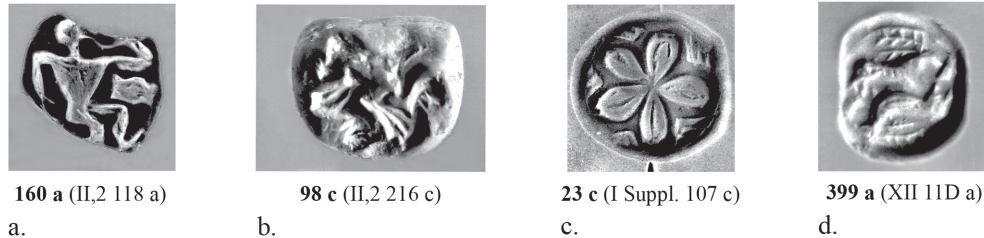


Fig. 56 Prisms with EM III/MM I Influences.

seals of Sbonias's Lions/Spiral Group (*fig. 56 b*).⁵⁸⁹ While similar compositions of animals are not unknown from Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms,⁵⁹⁰ the fact that the quadrupeds can be identified as lions brings the image close to the EM III/MM I representations. On the other hand, the technical execution of the manes of the animals is typical of *Dogs/lions* of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms. Most often, the necks of the lions on the hippo ivory stamp cylinders show horizontal, diagonal, cross, or fishbone hatching created by fine strokes engraved in the 'blanks'.⁵⁹¹ In contrast to that, the manes of the animals **98 c** are created by deep thick vertical cuts as is common on MM II steatite seals. The devices **98 a** and **98 b** do not find particularly good parallels among any of the two above discussed groups of seals. However, the paratactic composition on **98 a** and the reflection symmetrical image on **98 b** bring the piece close to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.

Regarding **7**, iconographically, the pose of the *Dog/lion 7 c* is typical of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.⁵⁹² However, the direction of the tail upwards with regard to its hindquarters only finds parallels with depictions of lions on hippo ivory seals from the Mesara, such as CMS II,2 nos. 249 and 295 b. The tail of the remaining *Dogs/lions* encountered on steatite prisms and showing this pose is directed downwards with regard to their hindquarters.⁵⁹³ On the other hand, the animals on the Mesara seals are not shown in pose I 1 but in I 3, which speaks in favour of the proximity of **7** to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms. Stylistically, the piece is also closer to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms than to any other seals. Interestingly, the execution of the *Dog/lion 7 b* could be compared to that of the animals on **98 c**.

Turning to **23**, the execution and iconographical features of the *Dog/lion 23 b* place it close to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms. On the other hand, the *Rosette 23 c*, which

⁵⁸⁹ E.g. CMS II,1 nos. 3 a, 224 a. For Sbonias's Lions/Spiral Group, see Sbonias 1995, 89–99, for its dating 98–99. The term *parading lions* is adapted from Yule (Yule 1989 a, 208–209 The Parading Lions/Spiral Complex).

⁵⁹⁰ E.g. **227 b**, **462 b**.

⁵⁹¹ E.g. CMS II,1 nos. 224 a, 248 a, 300 a, 321 a, 336 a.

⁵⁹² See quadruped pose I 1, *pl. 127*.

⁵⁹³ E.g. **326 a**, **435 a**, **548 c**, **584 c** (*pl. 23*).

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is only met once in connection with seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group⁵⁹⁴ is very often met on MM I seals from the Mesara (*fig. 56 c*).⁵⁹⁵ Reminiscent of EM III/MM IA glyptic is the enclosure of the motifs on **23 a** and **23 c** in a *Border with Hatched triangles as border supplements*. *Hatched triangles* are mainly connected with Yule's Border/Leaf Complex which is dated by Sbonias in EM III/MM IA–MM IB⁵⁹⁶ and only rarely appear in the iconography of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group.⁵⁹⁷ The combination of the animal **23 a** and the *Rosette 23 c* with such a border in particular brings to mind compositions of the Border/Leaf Complex.⁵⁹⁸ Also, the fact that the prism is gable-shaped and its two smaller sides are slightly plastically set off from its body bring it close to certain gables of the Border/Leaf Complex.⁵⁹⁹

399 is made of a whitish soft material which could be either some kind of paste or bone. The composition of the quadrupeds on **399 a** is typical for the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group (*fig. 56 d*). However, the elongated foreparts of the animals with the curving chests as well as the somewhat slanting vertical hatching which covers the bodies are easily comparable to the quadrupeds of EM III/MM I bone/hippo ivory seals.⁶⁰⁰ The human figure **399 b** does not find good parallels on EM and MM iconography,⁶⁰¹ although the fine hatching of the torso does bring to mind internal elements of motifs as they are rendered on EM III/MM I bone/hippo ivory seals.⁶⁰² The *Saltire of Ellipses 399 c* is easily comparable to the devices of CMS II,1 no. 233 from Marathokefalo, which is dated to EM III.⁶⁰³ Also the fact that the devices of **399 b** and **399 c** are enclosed in *Borders with Hatched triangles as border supplements* suggest influences from the EM III/MM I bone/hippo ivory glyptic.⁶⁰⁴

SEALS OF OTHER FORMS WHICH SHOW SIMILAR STYLISTIC TENDENCIES AS THE PRISMS WITH EM III/MM I INFLUENCES

The five prisms can be compared to many Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals and also to certain Prepalatial seals. However, a few pieces come closer to them in that they seem to

⁵⁹⁴ CMS VIII no. 10.

⁵⁹⁵ E.g. CMS II,1 nos. 153, 302 b, 368 a, 373, 374 b.

⁵⁹⁶ Yule 1980, 151–152, 209–210; Sbonias 1995, 100.

⁵⁹⁷ **72 c**.

⁵⁹⁸ Compare for example the images CMS II,1 nos. 126 a, 382 b; CMS II,2 no. 204 a; CMS III no. 66; Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellarakis 1997, 681 fig. 767. Also CMS II,8 no. 30.

⁵⁹⁹ E.g. CMS VI no. 14. Compare also the shape of the 'base' of the two pieces whose one end is rectilinear (**23 c** and CMS VI no. 14 b).

⁶⁰⁰ E.g. CMS II,1 nos. 268 a, 295 a, 300 a, 382 a.

⁶⁰¹ A distant parallel to the pose of the figure is found on CMS II,2 no. 127 of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group.

⁶⁰² E.g. CMS II,1 nos. 41, 22 a, 300 a, 321 a.

⁶⁰³ For the dating of the seal, see Sbonias 1995, 82. Compare also the device CMS II,6 no. 153 from Chamaizi (engraved on a markedly larger seal face) and that on CMS II,8 no. 24 from Knossos. *Ellipses* composed in similar devices on the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms are internally hatched (see **30 b** and **523 c**).

⁶⁰⁴ For this subject, see p. 267. **549** also shows stylistic elements which connect it to Sbonias's Lions/Spiral Group (for this piece, see pp. 96–97).

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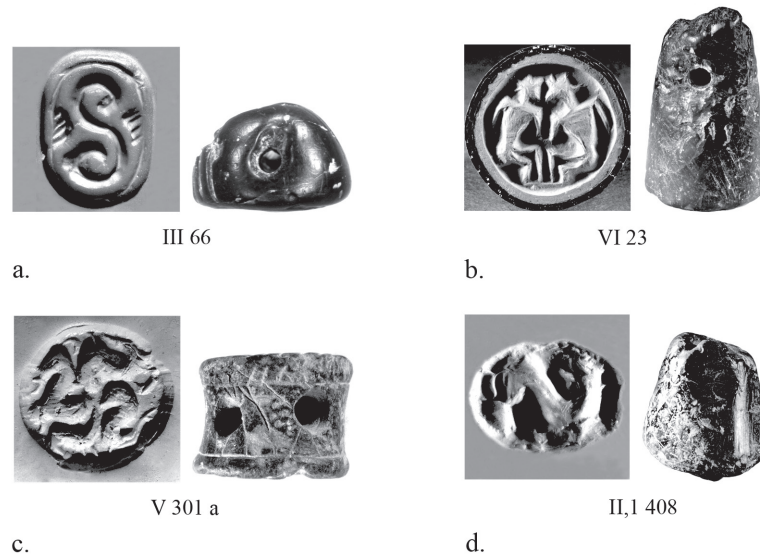


Fig. 57 Other seals stylistically close to the Prisms with EM III/MM I Influences.

combine iconographic and stylistic elements of EM III/MM I bone/hippo ivory glyptic with those of MM II soft stone glyptic and/or the use of soft stones.

The *S-spiral* on the steatite half-ovoid CMS III no. 66 is surrounded by a *Border with Hatched triangles as border supplements* as is the case with the devices **23 a**, **23 c**, **399 b**, and **399 c** (fig. 57 a). The bone/hippo ivory signet/Petschaft (?) Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellarakis 1997, 681 fig. 767 could be compared to **23 a** and **399 b** on account of the fact that it is engraved with a figural motif surrounded by a *Border with Hatched triangles as border supplements*.

The execution of the human figures on the elongated steatite conoid CMS VI no. 23 is reminiscent of that of the human figure **160 a** (fig. 57 b). The two figures display ‘blanks’ which are not outlined by deeper walls as well as plastically rendered buttocks and legs which are reminiscent of devices carved on hippo ivory seals, such as the one on CMS II,1 no. 222 a. The curves of figures on the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms differ in their gross execution which results in markedly bulkier legs.

The composition on CMS V no. 301 a, which belongs to a serpentine (?) or chlorite (?) reel, is similar to that on **98 c** and reminiscent of the EM III/MM I compositions of parading lions (fig. 57 c).⁶⁰⁵ Stylistically, the lions differ from those on **98 c** in that they show rounded intaglios and markedly more voluminous bodies. Their execution brings to mind that of the

⁶⁰⁵ A similar composition is seen on the hippo ivory zoomorphic seal CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 304.

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animal on the steatite conoid with Δ - or T-perforation CMS II,1 no. 408 (*fig. 57 d*). The shape, material, and iconography of this seal are close to that of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.⁶⁰⁶ However, the intaglio is rounder and the animal has an expressly more voluminous body than most of the motifs on these prisms.⁶⁰⁷ Panagiotopoulos adjuncts the piece to a group of hippo ivory stamp cylinders which show lions with rounded intaglios and characteristically voluminous bodies.⁶⁰⁸ It is true that the body of the quadruped CMS II,1 no. 408 is stylistically closer to that of the lions CMS II,1 no. 442 b and CMS V no. 301 a than to the body of any similar motifs on seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group. However, the pose of the animal is well represented among the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms whereas the open mouth which is very common there⁶⁰⁹ is not attested on the animals of Panagiotopoulos's group. Panagiotopoulos places his stamp cylinder group in the period after MM IA and points out that some stamp cylinder impressions have been found in contexts as late as MM IIB.⁶¹⁰ This would justify close iconographic and stylistic similarities of the motifs found on hippo ivory stamp cylinders and seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group and could explain the existence of a class of seals which combine iconographic and stylistic traits from both groups.⁶¹¹

DISTRIBUTION AND DATING

7 and **160** come from Malia, **98** from 'Gouves', CMS II,1 no. 408 from Krasi, and Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellaraki 1997, 681 fig. 767 from Archanes. We have seen that the first four seals as well as CMS VI no. 23 show close connections with the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group. Therefore, a provenance for these pieces of east-central Crete would also be supported by stylistic and iconographic considerations. On the other hand, the shape, material, and iconography of CMS V no. 301 would suggest a provenance from the Mesara.⁶¹² The material, iconography, and style of **399** would point to either Mesara or Archanes as its place of origin.⁶¹³ The fact that Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellaraki 1997,

⁶⁰⁶ Compare for example the devices **130 c**, **387 b**, **564 b**, CMS III no. 42.

⁶⁰⁷ For examples of rounder intaglios on these prisms, see **269 a**, **269 b**, **394 a**.

⁶⁰⁸ CMS II,1 nos. 396, 442, 481; CMS V no. 301; also the impressions CMS II,6 nos. 190, 191 (Panagiotopoulos 2002, 89). Compare these also to the bodies of the lions on the above discussed CMS V no. 301.

⁶⁰⁹ E.g. **1 c**, **127 c**, **411 a**, **564 b**, **331 a**.

⁶¹⁰ Panagiotopoulos 2002, 89.

⁶¹¹ The combination on the two sides of the hippo ivory stamp cylinder from Archanes Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellaraki 1997, 678 fig. 760–762 of a device which is very similar to **470 c** and of a composition of parading lions also supports the idea that hippo ivory stamp cylinders and seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group coincided for some time.

⁶¹² Material: Chlorite is very common for the manufacture of seals in the Mesara (for this subject, see the section 'Mesara Chlorite Prisms', pp. 120–134). Serpentine is never met in connection with the Mesara/Eastern Crete Steatite Group. Shape: Most soft stone reels come from the Mesara, e.g. CMS II,1 nos. 83, 116, 452; CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 278. Iconography: The device on CMS V no. 301 b is only encountered on seals which come from the Mesara, e.g. CMS II,1 nos. 23, 24, 34, 56, 350; CMS II,5 no. 116; V Suppl. 3 no. 126.

⁶¹³ All the parallels for the piece come from these two areas, see p. 117, also footnotes 600, 602.

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681 fig. 767, also not cut in stone, comes from Archanes could suggest that the prism in question comes from there. Iconographic and stylistic considerations alone cannot clarify the production place of **23** and CMS III no. 166. However, in these cases a place of manufacture in the Mesara or in Archanes would also seem possible.

Turning to dating, according to the excavator, **7** could come from a MM IB layer.⁶¹⁴ **160** comes from Dessenne's Workshop α , a large area situated to the west of the Malia Workshop from which often surface finds were recovered partly accumulated during a longer period of time.⁶¹⁵ This, the above discussed stylistic considerations, and the fact that the piece is not workshop fresh could be taken as indications that it does not constitute part of the production of the Workshop. The context of Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellaraki 1997, 681 fig. 767 from Archanes is EM III–MM IIA.⁶¹⁶ Of the above discussed seals, no further examples come from a dated context. On iconographic and stylistic grounds,⁶¹⁷ the pieces can be dated to MM IB/MM II.⁶¹⁸

MESARA CHLORITE PRISMS

2.7 % of the existing prisms belong to this group (*fig. 58*).⁶¹⁹ All but one piece, which is made of steatite,⁶²⁰ are cut in chlorite. The seals faces are either round or ellipsoidal but never elongated. The devices are cut freehand, the use of vertical pressure drills for the creation of 'cup sinkings' being limited. Deep intaglios with V-profiles or configured as 'blanks' with flat floors and, occasionally, deeper outline walls are common (*fig. 58 a, c, d, f, h, j, l*). Apart from that, also shallower, rounder, and softer intaglios are met (*fig. 58 b, e, g, i, k*).

The ornamental element prevails. Floral devices, such as bilateral branches, rosettes, and leaves, as well as repetition compounds put together from foliage or other floral devices are particularly favoured (*fig. 58 a–c*). Spirals and ornamental devices built of two or more strands are the most popular purely ornamental motifs (*fig. 58 d, f–h*). Figural motifs are only represented by human figures, ruminants, scorpions, and squids whereas hieroglyphs are not met (*fig. 58 i–l*). Among the repetition compounds are represented mostly radial and rotational devices composed of floral⁶²¹ or ornamental motifs (*fig. 58 b*). Supplementation and border compounds are not met whereas C-spiral roof compounds are very popular (*fig. 58 h*).⁶²²

⁶¹⁴ Poursat believes that the piece could have belonged to a MM IB fill he excavated in 1984 in a sounding in the room XI 3 (Jean-Claude Poursat, pers. comm.; for a mention of this layer, see Poursat 1985, 892).

⁶¹⁵ Poursat 1981, 160; Poursat – Papatsarouha 2000, 264.

⁶¹⁶ Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellaraki 1997, 674, 680–681.

⁶¹⁷ Similarities to EM III/MM I but also MM II seals.

⁶¹⁸ As regards the prisms, the author would tend to date **399** to MM IB/MM II and the rest to MM II.

⁶¹⁹ **31, 45, 57, 60, 101–105, 112, 216, 217, 336, 337, 341, 357, 503.**

⁶²⁰ **102.**

⁶²¹ E.g. **101 b, 103 c, 341 a.**

⁶²² E.g. **102 b, 357 c.**

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Fig. 58 Mesara Chlorite Prisms.

The occupation of the seal face by a single device or an ornamental image is preferred.⁶²³ In the few cases that more than one equally sized motif is combined in an image, they are arranged along the lines of parataxis, reflection symmetry or 180° rotational symmetry (*fig. 58 c*).⁶²⁴ Combinations of devices along the lines of 90°, 45°, and 135° rotational symmetries are not met.

Among the images whose nature can be identified, 68 % are ornamental and 29.8 % are descriptive.⁶²⁵ 'Pictographic' images are only represented by one example⁶²⁶ whereas hieroglyphic inscriptions are not met. Two descriptive images have a narrative character (*fig. 58 k*).⁶²⁷

⁶²³ Single device: e.g. 57 a, 60 a, 103 c, 104 b, 337 a. Ornamental image: e.g. 60 b, 503 b.

⁶²⁴ Parataxis: e.g. 336 b. Reflection symmetry: e.g. 503 c. 180° rotational symmetry: e.g. 60 c.

⁶²⁵ The nature of 2.1 % of the images met in this group cannot be identified.

⁶²⁶ 336 b. For this image, see p. 125. This example constitutes 2.2 % of the images of the group whose nature can be identified.

⁶²⁷ 337 a, 503 a.

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103 a (II,1 276 a)

a.



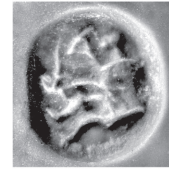
103 c (II,1 276 c)

b.



341 c (IV 123 c)

c.



337 a (III 214 a)

d.

Fig. 59 Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster.

STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Iconography and technical execution point to the existence of different stylistic tendencies among the Mesara Chlorite Prisms. **57**, **103**, **337**, and **341** constitute the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster (*fig. 59*). Repetition compounds composed of floral or ornamental devices, rosettes, as well as motifs created by the combination of more than one strands are characteristic of the iconography of these pieces. Representational motifs are scarce.⁶²⁸ The technical execution of the intaglios is easily comparable to engraving on seals made of bone/hippo ivory.⁶²⁹ Fine cuts create rather shallow intaglios with rounded U-profiles whereas ‘cup sinkings’ are rarely met. Foliage in particular, is formed by the creation of a shallow matrix in which is carved deeper but fine fishbone venation (*fig. 59 b*). Multiple strand motifs are created by the combination of parallel strands which penetrate deeper and more decisively into the stone. As a whole, the shallow carving creates loose, rather ill-defined motifs. The cluster constitutes part of the stone subgroup of Sbonias’s Foliage/Bone Group.⁶³⁰

101, designated as the Prism with the Walking Agrimi, is iconographically very close to the aforementioned cluster because it shows a preference for the depiction of rosettes and repetition compounds composed of floral devices (*fig. 60*). However, the technical execution of its motifs differs in that the cuts are deep and decisive. Petals or foliage are created by the combination of two deep cuts combined in such a way that a ridge rendering

⁶²⁸ **57 c**, **337 a**.

⁶²⁹ Compare for example **57 a** to Sakellarakis – Sapouna Sakellarakis 1997, 678 fig. 755 (bone/hippo ivory seal [?]); **103 b**, **103 c**, **341 a** to CMS II,1 nos. 44, 281, 293, 353.

⁶³⁰ Sbonias 1995, 103–107, for the stone subgroup 104–105. The subgroup consists of soft stone seals which show a preference for the depiction of foliage and rosettes. Sbonias also includes in it pieces engraved with S-spirals which are combined with leaves (Sbonias 1995, 105 fig. 3.16, also footnote 164). Such pieces are excluded from the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster by the present author because they are seen as indicative of a different development (for this subject, see pp. 126–127). For the difference of the iconography of Sbonias’s Foliage/Bone Group and Foliage/Ivory Group, see Sbonias 1995, 100.

STYLE GROUPS

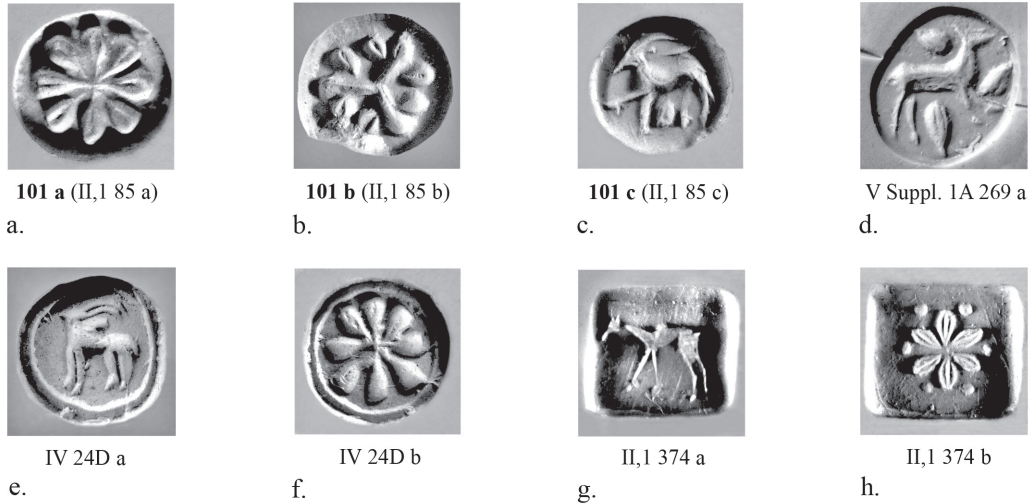


Fig. 60 a.–c. Prism with the Walking Agrimi; d.–h. Seals with similar iconography.

the interior of the depicted elements is left between them. Altogether, the engraving is sharp and well-defined.

101 comes very close to certain seals of Sbonias's 'Archanes Script' Group.⁶³¹ To a large extent, the iconography and style of this group are similar to those of the Foliage/Bone Group⁶³² but, as Sbonias notes, the 'Archanes Script' Group is characterised by more extensive preference for the depiction of quadrupeds as well as the appearance of hieroglyphic signs.⁶³³ The configuration and the pose of the *Agrimi* **101 c** but also the rosette **101 a** find good parallels among similar devices of that group.⁶³⁴ More to the point, the whole image **101 c** is iconographically but also stylistically similar to CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 269 a which belongs to an 'Archanes Script' seal.

Of the 'Archanes Script' Group seals which are comparable to **101**, CMS II,1 no. 374, CMS IV no. 24D, and CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 269 do not show the horror vacui or hieroglyphs on their other sides typical for the group (*fig. 60 d–h*). As is the case with **101**, the first two of these seals combine a ruminant on one seal face with a rosette on another (*fig. 60 e–h*).⁶³⁵

⁶³¹ For the group, see Sbonias 1995, 107–113.

⁶³² Especially as regards the wide use of foliage.

⁶³³ Sbonias 1995, 105.

⁶³⁴ Compare the animal **101 c** to CMS II,1 nos. 64 b, 374 a; CMS IV no. 24D a; CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 269 a. Also compare the pose of the animal to CMS II,1 nos. 64 c, 64 d; CMS XII no. 74 a. Sbonias includes CMS II,1 no. 374 both to the Foliage/Bone Group as well as to the 'Archanes Script' Group (Sbonias 1995, 105, 107). Compare the rosette **101 a** to CMS II,1 nos. 374 b, 391 m; CMS IV no. 24D b.

⁶³⁵ CMS II,1 nos. 374 a, 374 b; CMS IV nos. 24D a, 24D b.

STYLE GROUPS

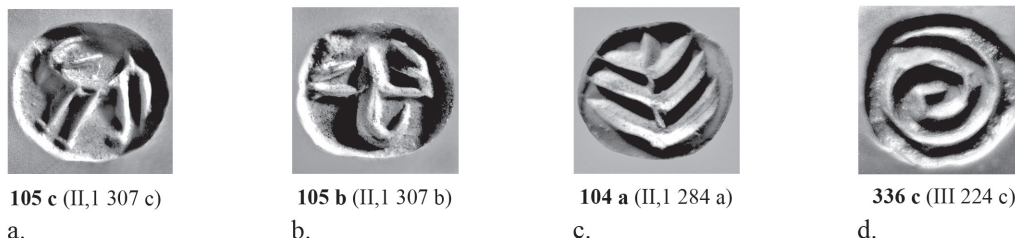


Fig. 61 Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster.

These three pieces are iconographically so close to **101** that they cannot be seen as part of a different group. However, according to Sbonias, the seals of the ‘Archanes Script’ Group were produced in Archanes.⁶³⁶ The prevalence of the floral element on **101** as well as its manufacture in chlorite, a stone which in MM was widely used in the south but not in the north of the island, would suggest a manufacture in the Mesara.⁶³⁷ For that reason, the piece is seen as closer to the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster and thus to the stone subgroup of the Foliage/Bone Group. This could suggest that the three aforementioned pieces, and especially CMS II,1 no. 374⁶³⁸ which is also made of chlorite, would fit better with the latter group. In any case, the iconographic elements that bring these four pieces close to the ‘Archanes Script’ Group⁶³⁹ underline once more the fact that the boundaries between this and the Foliage/Bone Group are by no means clear cut.⁶⁴⁰

104, **105**, **112**, **217**, and **336** are gathered in the Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster (*fig. 61*). Exceptionally, the representational element prevails on these seals. The most often recurring motifs are a plainly rendered *Agrimi*, *Scorpion*, ‘*Fern branch*’, and *Coil spiral*. The clear cuts are deep and decisive creating intaglios with broad V-profiles. The regular flat walls of the intaglios suggest a paring out of the stone with a single move. ‘Cup sinkings’ are only met as independent motifs and not as elements of other devices.⁶⁴¹ The seal faces of these pieces are outlined by very deep grooves which clearly differentiate them from the seal body and break the unity of the seal.⁶⁴² The cluster constitutes part of Yule’s Platanos Goat Complex.⁶⁴³

⁶³⁶ Sbonias 1995, 112–113.

⁶³⁷ Compare also the pose of the quadruped **101 c** to that of the animal CMS II,5 no. 287 from Phaistos.

⁶³⁸ Included by Sbonias in both the Foliage/Bone Group and the ‘Archanes Script’ Group (Sbonias 1995, 105, 107).

⁶³⁹ Compare especially **101 a** and CMS IV no. 24D b to CMS II,1 no. 391 m. Compare also the pose of the *Agrimi 101 c* to that of the quadrupeds CMS II,1 nos. 64 c, 64 d.

⁶⁴⁰ The Foliage/Ivory Group (Sbonias 1995, 99–102), the Foliage/Bone Group (Sbonias 1995, 103–107), the ‘Archanes Script’ Group (Sbonias 1995, 107–113), and the Group of White Pieces (Sbonias 1995, 113–118) are handled by Yule together in the Border/Leaf Complex (Yule 1980 a, 209–210).

⁶⁴¹ E.g. **104 c**, **112 c**.

⁶⁴² See especially **104**, **217**.

⁶⁴³ For the complex, see Yule 1980 a, 211.

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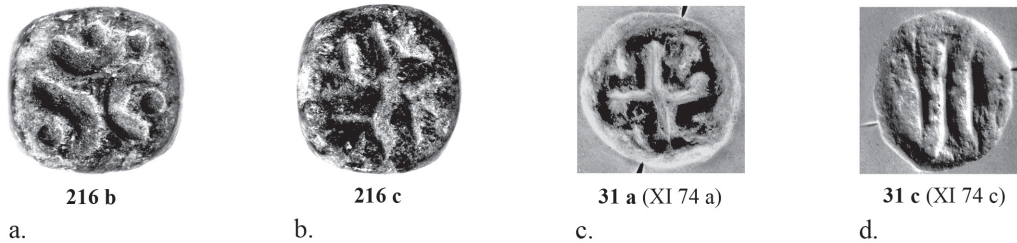


Fig. 62 Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices A.

Usually, the representational motifs appear alone on the seal face. However, **336 b** stands out on account of the apparently ‘pictographic’ image which combines two representational motifs, a *Leg* and a *Fish*. The lack of similar images on any seals of the Mesara Chlorite Group⁶⁴⁴ could suggest that this image either copies or imitates compositions from seals of another tradition. Its prototypes could be searched for among seals of the ‘Archanes Script’ Group⁶⁴⁵ in which the CHIC signs 010 and 019, which resemble a leg and a fish respectively, are often met.⁶⁴⁶ The fact that the combination CHIC signs 010 – 019 is not met among the existing hieroglyphic inscriptions⁶⁴⁷ could be taken as an indication that the engraver of **336 b**⁶⁴⁸ was using script signs whose significance he/she did not know. This would suggest that the image is an attempt to imitate a hieroglyphic inscription.

31 and **216** are conventionally designated as the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices A (*fig. 62*). The iconography of **216** is unparalleled among chlorite prisms. However, **216 a** and **216 b** show soft U-profiled intaglios which bring to mind the intaglios of **57 c** of the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster. The repetition compound **216 c** is reminiscent of repetition compounds composed of floral motifs on pieces of the same cluster⁶⁴⁹ and on the Prism with the Walking Agrimi. On the other hand, the execution of the trifurcated blossoms of the flowers is comparable to the edges of the branch **104 a** and especially **217 b** of the

⁶⁴⁴ Part of which are the Mesara Chlorite Prisms. For seals of other forms which belong to the group, see pp. 128–132.

⁶⁴⁵ For the group, see Sbonias 1995, 107–113.

⁶⁴⁶ For the CHIC sign 010, see for example CMS II,1 no. 391 l. For the CHIC sign 019, see especially CMS VI nos. 14 b, 14 c; also CMS II,1 nos. 391 h, 391 i, 393 a, 393 c, 394 a, 394 b (this sign is often described as a cuttlefish [see Evans 1909, 205; Jasink 2009, 69]).

⁶⁴⁷ See CHIC, 324–325 no. 010; 330–332 no. 019.

⁶⁴⁸ Or the client that ordered the seal. It is unknown whether it was the engravers who chose the depictions on each seal, whether the seals were manufactured according to each client’s wishes, or whether both these situations could have been the case. In the case of the hard stone hieroglyphic seals with complex inscriptions in particular, such as CMS VI no. 102 and CHIC no. 294, it would seem more probable that the seal engravers were executing images ordered by their clients. In favour of this would speak two considerations. On the one hand there is the fact that the inscriptions would have a certain meaning pertaining to the owner and their needs while on the other, it would seem rather improbable that the engraver had such a good command of the script that they could use it to create complex inscriptions.

⁶⁴⁹ Compare for example **103 b**, **341 a**.

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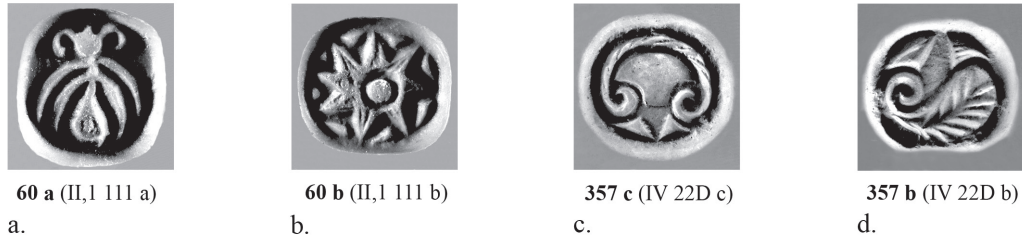


Fig. 63 Squid/Paisley Cluster.

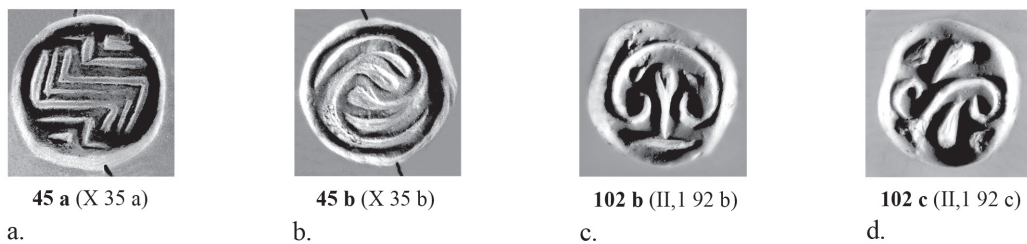


Fig. 64 Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B.

Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster. The round seal faces of **31** and the deep grooves surrounding them bring it close to **105** and **112** of the same cluster. However, the engraving is much less decisive than that of the pieces of this cluster whereas no iconographic parallels between these and **31** exist. Perhaps, and with a considerable degree of reservation, the images **31 a** and **31 c** could be compared to those on **112 c** and **336 a** respectively.

60 and **357** are brought together in the Squid/Paisley Cluster (*fig. 63*). The pieces are characterised by a preference for the depiction of centrally orientated compositions of ornamental nature and of a 'Squid' *b*. *C-spiral roof compounds*, *Paisleys*, *Triangles*, and *Star rosettes* are the most characteristic ornamental devices of the cluster. Regular intaglios, deep decisive cuts, board-like 'blanks' which bring to mind the intaglios of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals, and well-defined motifs are typical of the cluster. The occasional 'cup sinkings' are pared out with the blade and not drilled. The two prisms constitute part of Yule's Petaloid/Star Group.⁶⁵⁰

45 and **102**, the latter made of steatite, are the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B (*fig. 64*). All the seal faces of these pieces are engraved with ornamental images. Their intaglios range from rather shallow to relatively deep and show U-profiles whereas most of the devices are created by thin lines. The placement of the two pieces with regard to the aforementioned clusters is problematic because they combine iconographic features

⁶⁵⁰ Yule 1980 a, 214–215.

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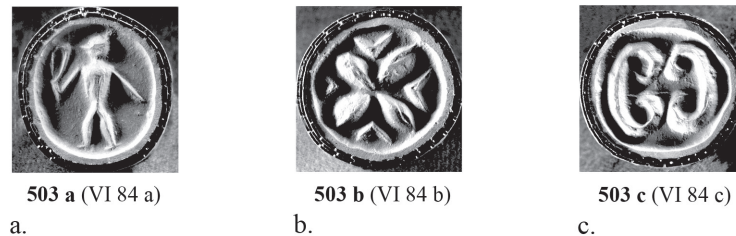


Fig. 65 Prism of the Man with the “Loop”.

of the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster and the Squid/Paisley Cluster. The multiple strand device **45 a** is reminiscent of similar ornamental devices of the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster. Sbonias classifies **102** with the stone subgroup of his Foliage/Bone Group,⁶⁵¹ presumably mainly on account of the *S-spiral* with leaves **102 c** which is a composition common on this group⁶⁵² but also because of the *Quatrefoil* **102 a**, a device also met on seals of the group.⁶⁵³ However, the *C-spiral roof compounds* **45 c** and **102 b** are characteristic of the Squid/Paisley Cluster. Moreover, the *S-spiral* with leaves **102 c** finds good parallels on compositions met on chlorite buttons and bottles which also belong to the Squid/Paisley Cluster.⁶⁵⁴ These seal forms are not met in connection with seals of the Foliage/Bone Group.⁶⁵⁵ Furthermore, the compositions on three sealings from Phaistos which show similar use of *Triangles* as those met on seals of the Squid/Paisley Cluster are comparable to **102 c**.⁶⁵⁶ Also the configuration of the ‘*V-flowers*’ **45 b** is reminiscent of the similar devices on one sealing from Phaistos which shows similar use of *Triangles*.⁶⁵⁷ The fact that most of the images of the two pieces in question find good parallels among images which are closer or belong to the Squid/Paisley Cluster would suggest a greater proximity of these seals to that cluster than to the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster.

503 is designated as the Prism of the Man with the “Loop” (*fig. 65*). The intaglios of the piece are deep and often rounded. The composition of the *C-spirals* on **503 c** can perhaps be compared to a certain extent to that of an EM III/MM IA early hippo ivory seal.⁶⁵⁸ On

⁶⁵¹ Sbonias 1995, 105 footnote 164 fig. 3.16.

⁶⁵² Sbonias 1995, 105. For an example of such a composition on a seal of this group, see CMS II,1 no. 293 b.

⁶⁵³ E.g. CMS II,1 nos. 135, 324. However, *Quatrefoils* are also encountered on seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group (e.g. **410 a** and **517 a**).

⁶⁵⁴ Buttons: e.g. CMS II,1 no. 349. Bottles: e.g. CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 191. For seals other than prisms which belong to this cluster, see pp. 131–132.

⁶⁵⁵ For the shapes of the seals of Yule’s Border/Leaf Complex, which encompasses, among others, also Sbonias’s Foliage/Bone Group, see Yule 1980, 210. For seals other than prisms which belong to the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster, see p. 128.

⁶⁵⁶ CMS II,5 nos. 187, 188, 189.

⁶⁵⁷ CMS II,5 no. 190.

⁶⁵⁸ Unpublished seal at the Heraklion Museum which belongs to Sbonias’s Foliage/Ivory Group (for the group, see

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the other hand, the *Quatrefoil with Chevrons* as angle-filling **503 b** finds good parallels on numerous compositions from Phaistos and can also be compared with the compositions on some Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.⁶⁵⁹

SEALS OF OTHER SHAPES THAT BELONG TO THE SAME GROUP AS OR ARE RELATED TO THE MESARA CHLORITE PRISMS

Various seals of other shapes, most of which show flat seal faces, can be compared to the Mesara Chlorite Prisms on iconographic and stylistic grounds. Some of them are so closely connected to these prisms that they can be seen as building with them the Mesara Chlorite Group. Within this group, prisms constitute ca. 21 % of the material and seals of other shapes ca. 79 %.⁶⁶⁰

Only a very restricted number of pieces of Sbonias's Foliage/Bone Group⁶⁶¹ are relatively good comparable to the prisms of the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster (*fig. 66*). These are made of bone and more rarely, of chlorite. Some parallels are met among the devices of the prisms in question and those on two conoids, a pyramidoid, both shapes with Δ -perforation, a disc, and perhaps a seal in the shape of a mollusc shell and a button.⁶⁶² Of these seals, only a chlorite conoid can be seen as actually belonging to the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster.⁶⁶³ A few steatite and bone seals can be compared to the Prism with the Walking Agrimi (*fig. 60 d-h; fig. 66 a*). These are two conoids with Δ -perforation, two low stamp cylinders, a rectangular plate, and a disc.⁶⁶⁴

The majority of other seals related to the prisms of the remaining clusters are made of chlorite. The images of the prisms of the Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster find iconographic parallels to those of a stamp cylinder, a gable, a seal in the shape of a female figure, a disc,

Sbonias 1995, 99–102).

⁶⁵⁹ Phaistos: e.g. CMS II,5 nos. 213–220 (although some of these seal types were impressed by convex seal faces). Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms: e.g. **410 a**, **487 c**.

⁶⁶⁰ Seals like CMS II,1 no. 44 which are related to the group but do not belong to it *stricto sensu* have not been taken into consideration when compiling these numbers. If such pieces are included in the group, the ratio prisms/seals of other forms changes to ca. 19 % prisms and 81 % seals of other forms.

⁶⁶¹ For the group, see Sbonias 1995, 103–107.

⁶⁶² Conoids: CMS II,1 no. 44 (bone, Agia Triada, Tholos A), 348 (chlorite [?], 'Platanos'). CMS II,1 no. 44 is related also to the Prism with the Walking Agrimi (see footnote 664). Pyramidoid: CMS X no. 23 (bone). Disc: CMS II,1 no. 293 (bone, Platanos, Tholos B). Seal in the shape of a mollusc shell: CMS II,1 no. 353 (?) (bone/hippo ivory, Porti, Tholos II). Button: CMS II,1 no. 72 (bone, Agia Triada, Tholos A).

⁶⁶³ CMS II,1 no. 348.

⁶⁶⁴ Conoids with Δ -perforation: CMS II,1 nos. 44 (bone, Agia Triada, Tholos A), 88 (steatite, Agia Triada, Tholos A). CMS II,1 no. 44 is related also to the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster (see footnote 662). Low stamp cylinders: CMS V Suppl. 1A nos. 269 (bone, 'Moni Odigitria'), 367 (steatite, Epidauros, Sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas, Altar). Rectangular plate: CMS II,1 no. 374 (chlorite, Siva). To this can also be connected the cube CMS II,1 no. 368 (steatite, 'Porti'). Disc: CMS IV no. 24D (steatite [?], 'Kaloi Limenes'); perhaps also CMS III no. 113 (steatite) and CMS XII no. 74 (bone [?])?

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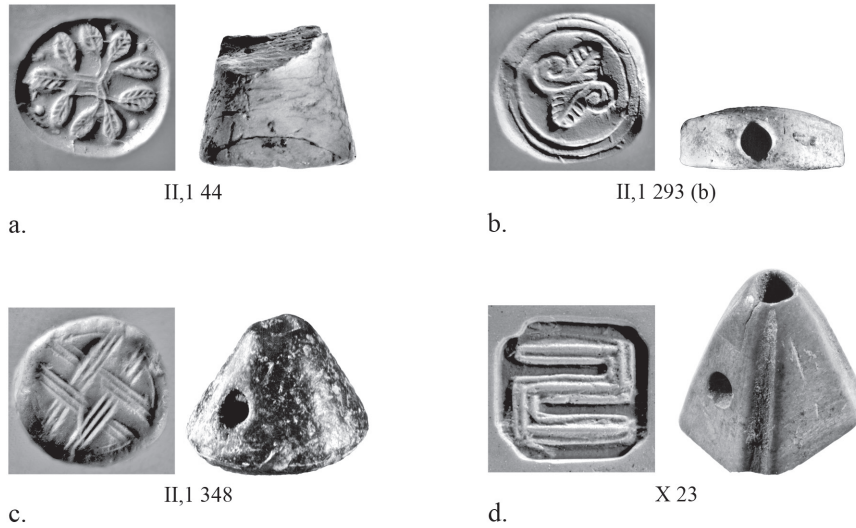


Fig. 66 Seals which show iconographic and/or stylistic similarities to prisms of the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster and to the Prism with the Walking Agrimi.

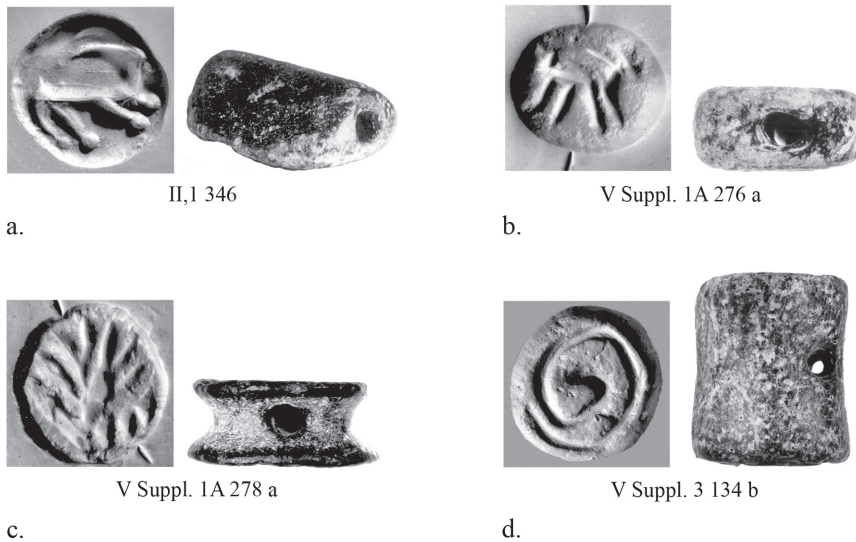


Fig. 67 Seals which show iconographic and/or stylistic similarities to prisms of the Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster and to the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices A.

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Fig. 68 Seals which show iconographic and stylistic similarities to the Squid/Paisley Cluster and to the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B .

a reel, and perhaps a hemispheroid and three buttons (*fig. 67*).⁶⁶⁵ The looser execution of the devices on the same disc and reel make them comparable also to the devices of **31** of the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices A (*fig. 67 b, c*). The image on a conoid may also be

⁶⁶⁵ Stamp cylinder: CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 134 (chlorite [?], 'Moni Odigitria?'); perhaps also CMS II,1 no. 326 (bone, Platanos, Tholos B)? Gable: CMS II,1 no. 346 (chlorite, 'Platanos, Tholos B'). Seal in the shape of a female figure: CMS II,1 no. 277 (chlorite, Platanos, Tholos B). Disc: CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 276 (chlorite, 'Moni Odigitria?'). Reel: CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 278 (chlorite [?], 'Moni Odigitria?'). Hemispheroid: CMS III no. 78 (chlorite). Buttons: CMS II,2 no. 21 (chlorite or schist, Phaistos); CMS V no. 487 (chlorite or schist, Agia Eirini, Kea, Area C, Room XVI); CMS VI no. 120 (chlorite). Even if not related to the cluster, the first of these buttons is certainly and the remaining two are very probably related to the Mesara Chlorite Group.

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comparable to the same piece.⁶⁶⁶ Comparable to a certain extent to **216** of the same cluster, mainly on iconographic grounds, are the compositions on two stamp cylinders.⁶⁶⁷

The prisms of the Squid/Paisley Cluster as well as the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B constitute part of a broader assemblage of seals which are mainly cut in chlorite and more rarely in steatite (*fig. 68*). Buttons and bottles with horizontal perforation on the handle, both shapes cut in chlorite, are most commonly associated with the prisms of the two clusters.⁶⁶⁸ Apart from these, chlorite or steatite Petschafte are also closely connected to these prisms.⁶⁶⁹ Furthermore, a pseudo-jasper disc and button belong to the same assemblage.⁶⁷⁰

Apart from these seals, numerous other chlorite pieces whose iconography and style does not find parallels among the prisms of the two clusters constitute part of the same development. Among these are some buttons and a disc which bear compositions with integrated centred-circles.⁶⁷¹ Some bottles with horizontal perforation on the handle and some seals in the shape of a hoof are also seen as part of the same development.⁶⁷²

⁶⁶⁶ CMS II,1 no. 288 (chlorite/schist, Platanos, Tholos B). Perhaps also the hemispheroid CMS IV no. 56 (schist [?], 'Malia')?

⁶⁶⁷ CMS II,1 no. 272 a (bone/hippo ivory, Platanos, Tholos B); CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 396 b (hippo ivory [?] Palaikastro, Block X, Room 1).

⁶⁶⁸ Buttons, Squid/Paisley Cluster: CMS II,1 nos. 90 (Agia Triada, Tholos A), 110 ('Agios Onoufrios, Tholos'), 247 (Platanos, Tholos A); CMS III nos. 86 ('Malia'), 90; CMS IV no. 75 ('Vorizia'); CMS VI nos. 110 (?), 111 ('Mesara'), 112 ('Mesara'), 113; CMS VII no. 24 (chlorite [?]). Buttons, Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B: CMS II,1 no. 349 ('Platanos'). Bottles with horizontal perforation on the handle, Squid/Paisley Cluster: CMS II,1 nos. 86 (Agia Triada, Tholos A), 275 (Platanos, Tholos B); CMS IV nos. 50 ('Mesara'), 53 ('Kaloï Limenes'). Bottles with horizontal perforation on the handle, Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B: CMS IV no. 52 ('Vorizia'); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 191; CMS VI no. 123 ('Central Crete'); CMS X no. 43. Bottles with horizontal perforation on the handle are distinctive of the glyptic of southern Crete and are very rarely found outside this area (for some examples which come from places outside this area, see CMS II,1 nos. 432, 473, and 474). In contrast to that, bottles with Δ -perforation are often made of steatite and come from the northern part of the island (e.g. CMS II,1 nos. 406, 428, 429).

⁶⁶⁹ Squid/Paisley Cluster: CMS II,1 no. 301 (steatite, Platanos, Tholos B); CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 320 (chlorite, 'Moni Odigitria?'); CMS VI no. 135 (chlorite [?]); CMS X no. 44 (steatite, convex seal face); CMS XIII no. 95 (chlorite).

⁶⁷⁰ Disc, Squid/Paisley Cluster: CMS VIII no. 22 (steatite [?]). Button: CMS II,2 no. 6 (Kamilari, Tholos). The chlorite/schist discoids CMS II,2 nos. 37, 41 from Mauro Spilio at Knossos are engraved with ornamental images which are very similar to those encountered on the two clusters in question. However, the soft execution of the motif on the second side of CMS II,2 no. 37 b, which does not find parallels on any prisms, buttons, or bottles, brings the piece close to a group of MM II discoids which display shallow and soft intaglios and seem to be related with Knossos (CMS II,2 nos. 36, 48, 57; CMS II,3 no. 13 [this latter a lentoid], all from Knossos). The similarities of the ornamental images on these seals to those of chlorite seals of the Squid/Paisley Cluster suggest certain overlapping between the two developments (note the similarity of the C-spiral roof compound on the button CMS II,2 no. 6 from Kamilari to that on the discoid CMS II,2 no. 41).

⁶⁷¹ Buttons: CMS IV no. 78 (chlorite or schist, 'Malia'); CMS VI nos. 108, 109, 114; CMS VII no. 23 (chlorite [?]). Disc: CMS III no. 120. The fact that the Petschaft CMS X no. 44 and the disc CMS VIII no. 22, which on account of their compositions cannot be distanced from the Squid/Paisley Cluster, also show motifs with integrated centred-circles (the disc CMS VIII no. 22 on side a) suggests that such devices constitute part of the repertoire of the same development (compare CMS VIII no. 22 b to **102 b** and CMS II,1 no. 110. Also CMS X no. 44 to CMS II,1 no. 301).

⁶⁷² Bottles with horizontal perforation on the handle: CMS II,1 no. 156 (Koumasa, Tholos E); CMS II,2 no. 10

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In the same grouping belong also four chlorite bottles with horizontal perforation on the handle whose iconography is reminiscent of the iconography of the seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group.⁶⁷³ The *Scorpion* combined with a 'Fir branch' on CMS VI no. 121 and the *Whirls* on CMS IV no. 51 and CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 321 are typical motifs of that group. The *Framed Saltire* on CMS II,1 no. 337 is a device shared between seals of the two traditions. In these cases, the material and shape of the seal define the affiliation to the one or the other group.⁶⁷⁴ More enigmatic is the nature of V Suppl. 1A nos. 51 and 52 from Gournia which are engraved in chlorite but show iconography characteristic of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group.⁶⁷⁵ The use of chlorite and the shape of the seals would suggest an affiliation with the Mesara Chlorite Group. However, the execution of the devices could suggest that the pieces were engraved by a hand which was familiar with cutting seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group.

SEALINGS IMPRESSED BY SEALS WHICH BELONG OR ARE RELATED TO THE MESARA CHLORITE GROUP

Sealings which can be attributed to seals which belong or are close to the Mesara Chlorite Group have come to light in Phaistos,⁶⁷⁶ Monastiraki, and perhaps Knossos (*fig. 69*). The great majority of these sealings are related to the Squid/Paisley Cluster and the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B.

One sealing from Phaistos could be seen as iconographically related to the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster and the Prism with the Walking Agrimi (*fig. 69 a*). The *Coil spiral* on another sealing from the same place can be connected with the Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster on mainly iconographic grounds (*fig. 69 b*).⁶⁷⁷ However, the fine strokes engraved on its surface do not find parallels among any of the devices of that cluster. Also the composition on **503 b** on the Prism of the Man with the "Loop" is comparable to a certain extent to three compositions from Phaistos.⁶⁷⁸

The prisms of the Squid/Paisley Cluster, the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B, and their related seals find numerous iconographic and stylistic parallels on sealings from

(Kamilari, Tholos); CMS III nos. 98 ('Phaistos'), 99 ('Lasithi'); CMS X no. 42; Militello 2000, 231 fig. 12 (Phaistos, Room 85). Seals in the shape of a hoof: CMS I Suppl. no. 104; CMS II,1 no. 296 (Platanos, Tholos B); CMS III no. 24; CMS IV nos. 91 ('Kamilari'), 15D ('Phaistos'); CMS V Suppl. 3 nos. 320 (Apodoulou, MM II building).

⁶⁷³ CMS II,1 no. 337 (Platanos, Tholos B); CMS IV no. 51 ('Apesokari'); CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 321 ('Moni Odigitria [?]'); CMS VI no. 121.

⁶⁷⁴ Other chlorite seals considered close to the Mesara Chlorite Group mainly because of their material are the button CMS XI no. 87, the signet CMS II,1 no. 337 (Platanos, Tholos B), and the seal of indefinable shape CMS III no. 57.

⁶⁷⁵ The pottery from the grave where the pieces were found dates to MM IA (Davaras in CMS V Suppl. 1A, 30; Soles 1979, 160–161).

⁶⁷⁶ Room XXV.

⁶⁷⁷ Compare to **105 a**, **336 c**. The similar devices on CMS II,5 nos. 184, 185 would perhaps fit better with the Squid/Paisley Cluster on account of the strokes and the *Triangles* that surround the *Coil spirals* respectively. For this subject, see also footnote 681.

⁶⁷⁸ CMS II,5 nos. 217, 218, 220.

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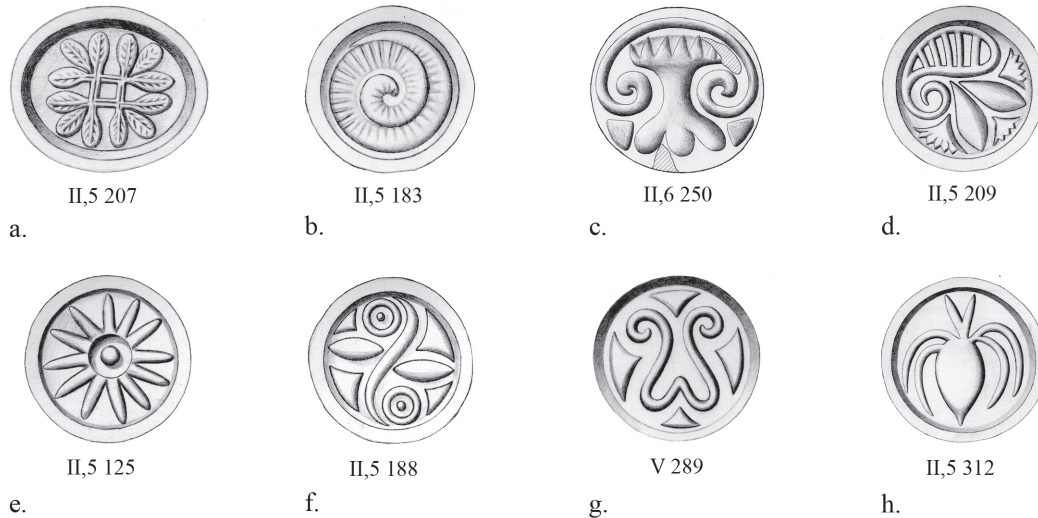


Fig. 69 Sealings impressed by Mesara Chlorite Seals or by seals which show similarities to them.

Phaistos (fig. 69 c–f, h). *C-spiral roof compounds*, combinations of *S-spirals* or *Paisleys* with leaves⁶⁷⁹ and *Triangles*, *Star rosettes* with central ‘cup sinking’, ‘*Squids*’ b, and a large number of compositions of ornamental nature which can be attributed to seals of the two clusters on stylistic grounds are represented there.⁶⁸⁰ The series of *Chevrons* above the walking *Pig/boar* CMS II,5 no. 287 from the same place could also suggest its affiliation with the two clusters as it is reminiscent of similar series of strokes as encountered on seals associated with them.⁶⁸¹

Also, some compositions of an ornamental nature encountered among the few published sealings from Monastiraki are stylistically related to the *Squid/Paisley Cluster* and the *Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B* (fig. 69 g).⁶⁸² Finally, two seal types from Knossos show

⁶⁷⁹ Many of these, e.g. CMS II,5 nos. 187–189, would be termed in the present study *Grain ellipses*. Others, e.g. CMS II,5 nos. 210, 211, would be named *Stemless paisleys*.

⁶⁸⁰ *C-spiral roof compounds*: CMS II,5 no. 176; CMS II,6 no. 250. Compositions of *S-spirals* with leaves and *Triangles*: CMS II,5 nos. 187–189 (the latter impressed by a convex seal face). Compositions of *Paisleys* with leaves and *Triangles*: CMS II,5 nos. 209–212. *Star rosettes* with central ‘cup sinkings’: CMS II,5 nos. 125, 158. ‘*Squids*’ b: CMS II,5 no. 312; also no. 302; less nos. 301, 303. Other compositions of ornamental nature: CMS II,5 nos. 169–173, 179–181, 190.

⁶⁸¹ E.g. Militello 2000, 231 fig. 12. However, note the iconographic similarity of the beast CMS II,5 no. 287 with the same animal CMS II,1 no. 64 d of the ‘Archanes Script’ Group. For this group, see Sbonias 1995, 107–113. Perhaps also CMS II,2 nos. 184 and 185 could be affiliated with the two clusters on account of similar elements surrounding the *Coil spirals*. These compositions find a parallel on the steatite Petschaft CMS III no. 111 from ‘Malia’. However, compare them also to the EM III/MM IA CMS II,1 no. 377.

⁶⁸² CMS V nos. 288, 289; Kanta 1999, pl. 84 Mo 45 (?), Mo 318 left.

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C-spiral roof compounds which can perhaps be associated with the two clusters on account of the fact that they were impressed by flat soft stone intaglios.⁶⁸³

DISTRIBUTION

All the prisms of the group with secure provenance come from tholoi in the Mesara (*fig. 70 a*).⁶⁸⁴ Out of the three examples with uncertain provenance, two come from areas in the Mesara where tholoi have come to light and one from Ligortynos to the east of the plain (*fig. 70 b*).⁶⁸⁵

The distribution of the seals of other forms which belong or can be related to the group is similar to that of the prisms. The large majority of examples have been recovered or are reported to have been found in areas within or more rarely, around the Mesara. Apart from these, an example comes from the Argolis in the Peloponnese, one from Agia Eirini in Kea, and three are reported to have been found in places in eastern Crete.⁶⁸⁶ Turning to the sealings which can be related to the group, it has been noted above that the great majority of them have been found in Phaistos, only a few examples coming from Monastiraki and possibly from Knossos.

The distribution of these seals suggests that their centres of production were located in south-central Crete, and most probably in the Mesara. The very small number of pieces recovered outside this area suggests that they constitute imports from the southern part of Crete.

DATING

The tholoi, from which the bulk of the material comes, were used throughout a long period of time. This fact together with the lack of clear stratigraphy does not allow the exact dating of the group on the basis of context evidence. However, both the fact that a large number of seals come from Tholos B of Platanos, which was in use predominantly in MM IA–MM II and that no seal comes from an exclusively EM context suggest that the pieces are not earlier than MM.⁶⁸⁷ Considering that the large majority of tholoi fell out of use after MM

⁶⁸³ CMS II,8 nos. 48, 49.

⁶⁸⁴ Agia Triada (Tholos A [101, 102]), Platanos (Tholos B [103–105]), Apesokari (Tholos B [216, 217]).

⁶⁸⁵ 'Tholos at Agios Onoufrios' (60), 'Kamilari' (357), Ligortynos (341).

⁶⁸⁶ Argolis: CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 367 (steatite, Epidauros). Agia Eirini: CMS V no. 487. Eastern Crete: CMS III nos. 78 ('Malia'), 86 ('Malia'), 99 ('Lasithi'). The affiliation with the group of 396 from Palaikastro, V Suppl. 1A nos. 51 and 52 from Gournia, and CMS IV no. 56 from 'Malia' is debatable.

⁶⁸⁷ Also in favour of dating the group later than EM III are the compositional principles encountered on the images of these seals. The occupation of the seal face by one motif contrasts with the EM glyptic in which rapport patterns and complicated images composed of various groups of smaller motifs are characteristic (for an overview of the EM II–MM IA early glyptic, see Sbonias 1995, 74–102).

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Fig. 70 Distribution of the Mesara Chlorite Prisms: a. find places of prisms with secure provenance: 1. Platanos; 2. Apesokari; 3. Agia Triada. b. find places of prisms with secure and uncertain provenance: 1. Ligortynos; 2. Platanos; 3. Apesokari; 4. Kamilari; 5. Agia Triada; 6. Agios Onoufrios.

II⁶⁸⁸ and that none of the four pieces which come from other sites⁶⁸⁹ has been recovered in a later context, MM II must be seen as the terminus post quem non for the production of the seals of the group.

Stylistic considerations could suggest a dating to MM IA late/MM IB for the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster, the Prism with the Walking Agrimi, the Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster, and the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices A. We have seen that the seals of the Foliage/Multiple Strand Motif Cluster and the Prism with the Walking Agrimi find some parallels on seals of Sbonias's Foliage/Bone Group and 'Archanes Script' Group

⁶⁸⁸ Only the Kamilari tholos was used down to the end of MM III or early LM. No information is available for the context of the Tholos B of Apesokari.

⁶⁸⁹ CMS V Suppl. 1A nos. 367, 396; CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 320; Militello 2000, 231 fig. 12.

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which are dated by Sbonias to MM IA late/MM IB.⁶⁹⁰ The configuration of the intensely set off disc-shaped seal faces of the Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster prisms brings to mind the disc-shaped seal faces of the cube CMS II,1 no. 64 which belongs to the MM I ‘Archanes Script’ Group.⁶⁹¹ More to the point, most of the shapes of the seals which come close to the prisms of that cluster, i.e. gables, reels, stamp cylinders, and seals in the shape of female figures are, when cut in stone, characteristic of EM III/MM I and MM I. Yule dates the prisms of the cluster to MM IA/B on account of stylistic comparisons of the branch **104 a** with devices which he names ‘bilateral branches’ and which are common in his EM III/MM IA Parading Lions/Spiral Complex.⁶⁹² The clear V-profiled intaglios of such devices are indeed similar to those of the prisms of the cluster.⁶⁹³ In addition, the fact that the composition on **336 b** seems to imitate motifs of the ‘Archanes Script’ Group⁶⁹⁴ could suggest the temporal coexistence of the Agrimi/Scorpion Cluster and this group. The stylistic similarities of the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices A with prisms of the above clusters would suggest a similar dating for the two pieces. The similarity between the device **216 c** and that on CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 396 b, which comes from a MM I context, could also suggest a MM I dating for **216**.

Yule dates the seals of the Squid/Paisley Cluster to MM IB/MM II on account of mainly context evidence and the fact that buttons and bottles which are characteristic of the cluster are mainly dated to MM IB/MM II.⁶⁹⁵ The remarkable similarities of the seals which belong to the Squid/Paisley Cluster as well as of the Two Prisms with Ornamental Devices B with the seal types of Phaistos leave no doubt that the pieces reached their floruit in MM II. The existence of a *C-spiral roof compound* and the composition of an *S-spiral* with leaves and *Triangles* on two MM II discoids from Knossos⁶⁹⁶ verify the idea that such compositions date mainly, if not exclusively, to MM II. The fact that the seal face of CMS X no. 44 which bears a composition characteristic of the Squid/Paisley Cluster is convex also suggests a MM II dating for these seals.⁶⁹⁷ Moreover, the deep cut intaglios, the broad use of board-like ‘blanks’, and, in some instances, the iconography of the prisms of the Squid/Paisley Cluster⁶⁹⁸ are reminiscent of the engraving on the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group and

⁶⁹⁰ For this subject, see pp. 122–124, 128.

⁶⁹¹ Compare the seal faces of this piece for example to the seal faces of **104**.

⁶⁹² E.g. CMS II,1 nos. 254 a, 254 b; CMS IV no. 34 b (Yule 1980 a, 211). The Parading Lions/Spiral Complex corresponds grossly to Sbonias’s EM III–MM IA early Lions/Spiral Group (for the Parading Lions/Spiral Complex, see Yule 1980 a, 208–209; for the Lions/Spiral Group, see Sbonias 1995, 89–99).

⁶⁹³ Compare especially the trifurcated upper part of the branch **104 a** to the similar elements of the devices CMS II,1 nos. 254 a, 254 b.

⁶⁹⁴ For this subject, see pp. 125

⁶⁹⁵ Yule 1980 a, 214–215; for the dating of buttons and bottles, see Yule 1980 a, 34–37.

⁶⁹⁶ CMS II,2 nos. 37 a, 41. For these discoids, see footnote 670.

⁶⁹⁷ Convex seal faces start coming into vogue during MM II. Earlier than this period, they appear mainly on soft stone discoids (for the time span of the use of discoids, see Yule 1980 a, 50–51).

⁶⁹⁸ Compare for example the composition on **60 c** to that on **235 a** (and less to those on **143 b**, **325 c**, **521 c**) of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group. Also the configuration of the ‘*V-flowers*’ **45 b** to that of the similar devices **353**

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could suggest interaction between the two traditions. The existence of a multiple strand motif on **45 a** which is iconographically and stylistically reminiscent of MM I motifs could suggest that the production of the two clusters had already started by MM I. For that reason, Yule's dating of the pieces to MM IB/MM II period is accepted.

The only hint towards dating the Prism of the Man with the "Loop" would be the composition on **503 b** which finds some parallels on prisms of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group and on numerous sealings from Phaistos.⁶⁹⁹ Because of this consideration, a tentative dating of the piece to MM IB/MM II is proposed.

Summarizing the above discussed evidence, the Mesara Chlorite Group is dated to MM IA late/MM IB–MM II.

DAWKINS PRISM

604 which was part of the Dawkins collection is known to the author by negatives kept at the archive of the CMS in Marburg (*fig. 71*).⁷⁰⁰ Its material is shiny but the rough texture of the intaglio could be indicative of a stone coarser than steatite. It is possible that the piece is cut in chlorite which, when abraded, also has a soapy texture.⁷⁰¹ The seal faces are elongated ellipsoidal. The intaglios have been created mainly by chafing, are rather shallow, and have U-profiles. Many of the elements of the motifs are linearly rendered. On it are met descriptive and ornamental images.

The prism was excluded from CMS VIII, possibly on account of doubts regarding its authenticity.⁷⁰² However, its iconography finds good parallels among some chlorite seals which are, in turn, comparable to other chlorite pieces. The configuration of the *Man in profile* as well as the Π -shaped *Stool 604 a* are easily comparable to the same motifs on the chlorite reel Chatzi Vallianou 1987, pl. 192 e from the Sopata Kouse Tholos (*fig. 72 a, left*). The *Tridents 604 b* find a very good parallel with the similar motifs on seal face CMS II,1 no. 452 a, which belongs to another chlorite (?) reel from 'Kamilari' (*fig. 72 b*). The central circle of the *Star rosette* CMS II,1 no. 452 b is easily comparable to the central circle of the whirl on Chatzi Vallianou 1987, pl. 192 e (*fig. 72 a, centre*).⁷⁰³ Similar iconography to these reels is shown on the bone reel CMS II,1 no. 189 from Tholos I of Lentas, two conoids with Δ -perforation, i.e. the chlorite/schist CMS IV no. 55 from 'Kaloï Limenes' and the chlorite

a, 469 a of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group. Compare the same devices on **45 b** to the MM II hard stone seals CMS VIII no. 102 and CMS IX no. 31 and to the sealing CMS II,5 no. 190 from Phaistos.

⁶⁹⁹ Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group: e.g. **410 a**. Phaistos e.g. CMS II,5 nos. 213–220 (although some of these sealings were impressed by convex seal faces).

⁷⁰⁰ Found among negatives of seals which have been published at CMS VIII. The negatives of the prism are labelled DA 100 D1 (this inscription could be read as Dawkins no. 100 Dubitandum 1). The author has had the photographs published here developed from these negatives.

⁷⁰¹ For the qualities of chlorite, see pp. 32–33.

⁷⁰² See footnote 700.

⁷⁰³ For the association of the trident with the star in Minoan iconography (CMS II,1 no. 452 a, b), see Soles 2007, 254–255.

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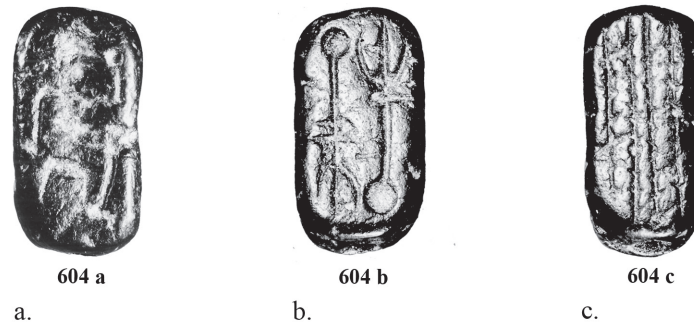


Fig. 71 The Dawkins Prism.

CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 326 from the 'Tzambakas House' in Chamaleuri, and the chlorite gable CMS X no. 41 (*fig. 72*). These seals, which unlike **604** have deep intaglios with V-profiles or, more rarely, flat board-like 'blanks', constitute the Dawkins Prism Group along with **604**.⁷⁰⁴

The fact that all but one piece of the group with a provenance come from the Mesara⁷⁰⁵ suggests that the centres of production of these seals were located in south-central Crete. Since none of the pieces has been found in a clear EM context and one piece comes from a MM I context,⁷⁰⁶ it would seem more reasonable to suggest MM I as the period of production of these seals. However, whereas most of the shapes of the seals that belong to the group fit well in the MM I period,⁷⁰⁷ the elongated seal faces of the Dawkins prism itself are strongly reminiscent of the faces of many MM II Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms. For this reason, and because the context of the chlorite reel Chatzi Vallianou 1987, pl. 192 e does not exclude a MM II dating, the Dawkins Prism Group is better dated to MM I/MM II.

PHAISTOS AGRIMI PRISM

388 is made of steatite which is engraved freehand (*fig. 73*). It has ellipsoidal seal faces and soft medium deep intaglios with U- and V-profiles. The images on all its three sides are descriptive, each showing a figural motif flanked by floral fillers.

⁷⁰⁴ No examples of sealings exist which can be attributed to seals of the Dawkins Prism Group with certainty. It would seem possible that sealings such as CMS II,5 no. 324 from Phaistos, which is, however, impressed by a convex seal face, are connected to the group in some way.

⁷⁰⁵ The exception is V Suppl. 3 no. 326 which comes from Chamaleuri in the north coast of west-central Crete.

⁷⁰⁶ CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 326. The context of CMS II,1 no. 189 is EM II–MM IA. The piece Chatzi Vallianou 1987, pl. 192 e is reported to have been found in the earth excavated by the tomb looters which is dated to EM III–MM IA/IIA.

⁷⁰⁷ Stone reels and gables are characteristic of MM I.

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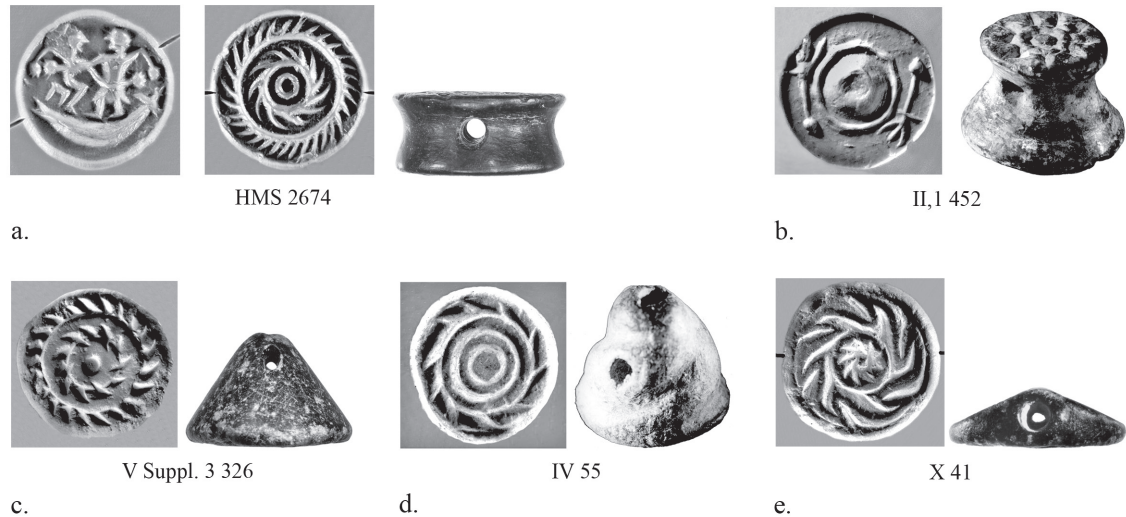


Fig. 72 Seals of the Dawkins Prism Group.

The closest iconographic parallels for the compositions on this piece are encountered on seals and sealings from central Crete. The *Agrimi* **388 c** is easily comparable to those on the chlorite discoids CMS VI no. 152 from ‘Knossos’ and CMS VI no. 154⁷⁰⁸ whereas the animal **388 b** finds an iconographic parallel on the serpentine lentoid CMS II,4 no. 145 from ‘Knossos’ (fig. 74).

Not only iconographic but often also stylistic considerations bring **388** close to the glyptic tradition represented on the Phaistos sealings. The composition on **388 a** is easily comparable to that on CMS II,5 no. 297 from Phaistos (fig. 73 a; fig. 75 a).⁷⁰⁹ On the two examples, man and ape have the same pose and are flanked by slightly curving “Saw branches”. Similar “Saw branches” also frame the *Agrimi* of CMS II,5 no. 255 (fig. 75 c). While the configuration of the legs and the beak of the *Waterfowl* **388 b** brings to mind the lowest *Waterfowl* on **3 c** of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group, the rendering of the animals’ body differs considerably. The intaglios of **388 b** are much softer whereas the body and tail of the bird are differentiated by vertical and horizontal hatching respectively. The hatched tail of the animal could be compared to the tail of the bird CMS II,5 no. 308. Composition, iconography, and technical execution of the *Agrimi* on **388 c** are easily comparable to CMS II,5 nos. 254, 255 (fig. 73 c; fig. 75 b, c). The pose of the *Agrimia* as well as the configuration of the long horns which are only distinguished from each other by a thin ridge and curve to the back ending under the root of a long ear are very similar. Also the V-shaped intaglios of CMS II,2 no. 254 and **388 c** are easily comparable. More

⁷⁰⁸ CMS VI no. 153 b which belongs to a rock crystal discoid from ‘Sfaka’ is also engraved with a similar *Agrimi*.

⁷⁰⁹ This latter impressed by a planoconvex seal face.

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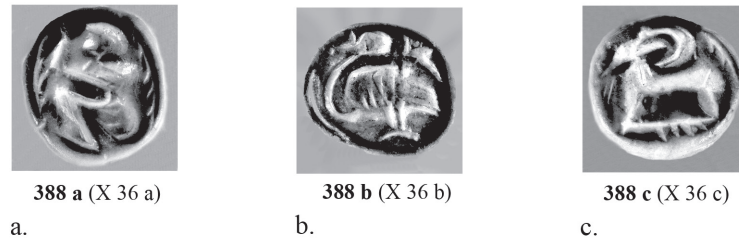


Fig. 73 The Phaistos Agrimi Prism.



Fig. 74 Seals with iconography reminiscent of the Phaistos Agrimi Prism: a., b. discoids; c. lentoid .

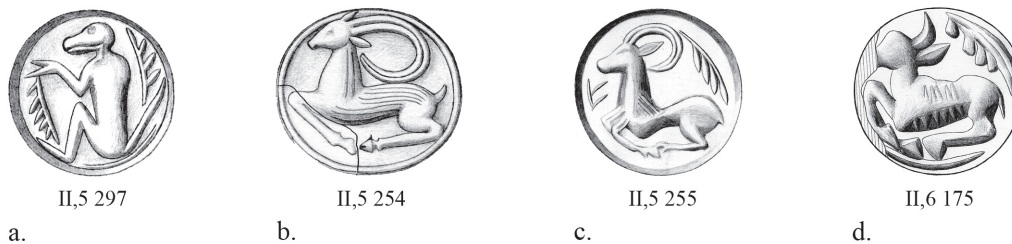


Fig. 75 Sealings with similar iconography to the Phaistos Agrimi Prism.

to the point, the overall composition of **388 c**, displaying short fine lines in front of the quadruped and a curving “*Saw branch*” diagonally above its back, is almost identical to that of CMS II,5 no. 255. Apart from these sealings, the composition and technical execution of the intaglio on **388 c** are comparable also to CMS II,5 nos. 256 and 262.⁷¹⁰ Finally, the composition on CMS II,6 no. 175 from Malia also finds a parallel to **388 c** although in this case stylistic considerations set the two pieces apart (*fig. 75 d*).⁷¹¹

⁷¹⁰ Compare the execution of the head of the animals on these three examples; also the V-profiled intaglio of CMS II,5 no. 262 to the intaglio of **388 c**.

⁷¹¹ The animal CMS II,6 no. 175, engraved on a convex seal face, has a more robust body than that on **388 c**. The seal type can be connected to the Petschaft CMS VIII no. 33 which also has convex seal faces (compare the execution of the ear and horn of the two quadrupeds). The composition on this latter seal shows similarities to those of numerous

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The fact that the best parallels for **388** are encountered on seals from ‘Knossos’ and sealings from Phaistos suggest a connection of the piece with central Crete. The similarities of the prism compositions with compositions from Phaistos and with those of two MM II discoids suggest a dating to MM II.

BRITISH MUSEUM PRISMS

364 and **368** are cut in steatite and are engraved freehand (*fig. 76*). Their seal faces are ellipsoidal and very slightly convex, such that the seals appear somewhat swollen. Faint traces of fine grooves can be discerned on their interfacial edges but not on their profiles, which seem to have been plain from the outset. The intaglios are deep and have either flat floors or, V- or U-profiles. **364** is engraved with representational and **368** with mainly ornamental images. It is unknown whether the ‘*Egyptian arrow*’ **368 b** was meant to have a certain symbolism or whether it was used as a simple ornament. A preference for the depiction of vegetal motifs as well as care in rendering details in the interior of the motifs characterise the two prisms.

The compositions are not very different from those of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.⁷¹² However, some of the devices do not find iconographic parallels with other Minoan seals whereas the configuration of those which do is idiosyncratic. The *Branch with leaves* **364 a**, the *Shrimp/prawn* **364 c**, and the ‘*Egyptian arrow*’ **368 b** are foreign to the Minoan repertoire. The eight legs of the *Crab* **364 b** bring it closer to depictions of the animal on hard stone seals and distance it from its MM depictions on soft stone seals.⁷¹³ The deep outlines of the petals of the *Quatrefoil* **368 c** and the hollow central circle create an idiosyncratic device. Unique is the use of *Circles* and *Grain ellipses* as main devices and/or fillers on **368 a** and **368 b**. Also the very ornate character of the images on the two latter seal faces is unusual.

The shape and iconography of the two pieces could be taken as indications that the two seals are not Minoan. While the use of the ‘*Egyptian arrow*’ **368 b**, which finds a parallel on the Egyptian hieroglyph T 11,⁷¹⁴ could suggest a connection of the pieces with Egypt, it would seem more probable that the pieces are modern. The closest stylistic parallels to the two prisms are encountered on the soft stone disc CMS II,1 no. 341 from Tholos B of Platanos and the chlorite bottle with horizontal perforation on the handle (?) CMS III no. 52 (*fig. 77*).⁷¹⁵

sealings from Phaistos (CMS II,5 nos. 261, 265, 266, 288, 308) but also to that of the bone (?) cushion Detournay – Poursat – Vandenaebelle 1980, 181 no. 252 from Malia.

⁷¹² Compare for example the composition on **364 b** to that on **206 c**; that on **364 c** to that on **270 c**; that on **368 c** to that on **410 a**.

⁷¹³ Hard stone seals: e.g. CMS II,8 nos. 154–156; CMS XIII no. 62. Soft stone seals: e.g. **119 b**, **206 c**, **297 a**.

⁷¹⁴ For this sign, see Gardiner 1957, 512. For another encounter of this device on a seal, see the Egyptian (?) scarab CMS VIII no. 151.

⁷¹⁵ CMS II,1 no. 34: Not steatite; compare the execution of the *Rosette* on this seal to that of the *Quatrefoil* **368 c**. CMS III no. 52: Compare the configuration of the petals/leaves of the device on this seal to the configuration of the

STYLE GROUPS

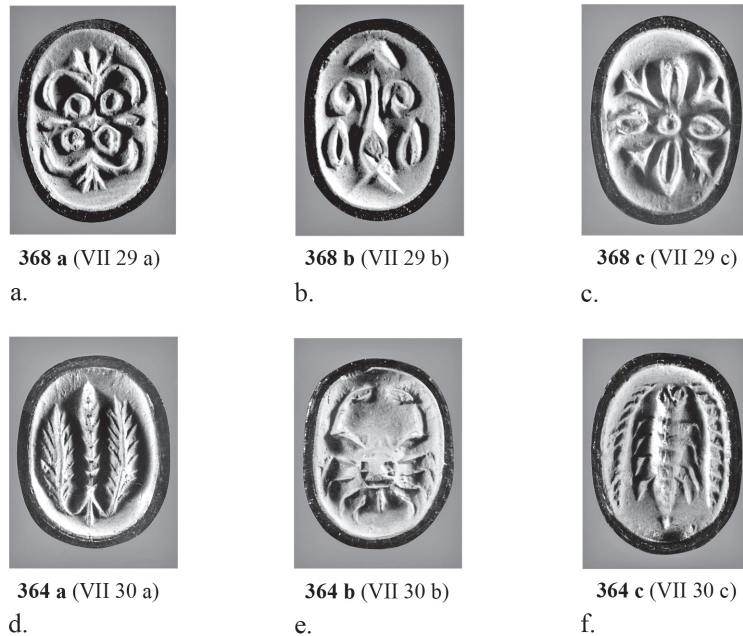


Fig. 76 The British Museum Prisms.

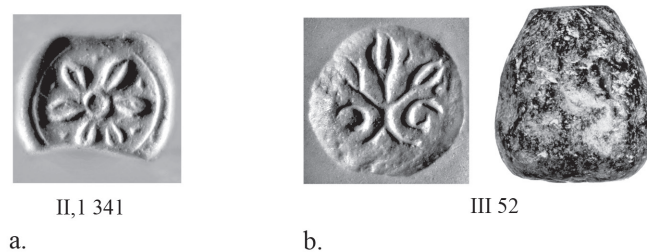


Fig. 77 Seals with stylistically similar engraving to the British Museum Prisms: a. disc; b. bottle.

None of the two prisms has a provenance. The fact that CMS II,1 no. 341 comes from Platanos as well as the shape and material of CMS III no. 52 would suggest a provenance from the Mesara.⁷¹⁶ The Tholos B of Platanos wherefrom CMS II,1 no. 341 comes was in use from EM III–MM II. This, the material of the two prisms, their iconography which is not that dissimilar from the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms, as well as the shape and material of CMS III no. 52⁷¹⁷ would suggest a MM IB/MM II dating for the two pieces, if they are indeed Minoan.

Grain ellipses 368 b; also the use of the *J*-spirals on the two compositions.

⁷¹⁶ For the connection of chlorite bottles with horizontal perforation on the handle with the Mesara, see footnote 668.

⁷¹⁷ For this subject, see the section ‘Mesara Chlorite Prisms’, pp. 120–134, especially pp. 131–132, 134, also footnote 668.

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PLATANOS PRISM WITH THE CABLE DEVICES

106 is made of steatite and has compressed ellipsoidal seal faces (*fig. 78*). It is engraved freehand, the motifs being created by U-profiled lines that resemble cables. The engraving is regular and the intaglios smooth. The distinction of separate devices in the images is difficult or impossible because the lines from which the devices are created are continuous. Descriptive images and images of unidentifiable nature are encountered.

A small number of seals of other forms, mostly made of steatite and always having flat seal faces, can be connected to this prism (*fig. 79*). These are two four-sided prisms and a conoid.⁷¹⁸ Perhaps comparable to the prism in question but of poorer workmanship are also the devices on some rectangular plates, a gable-shaped conoid, a truncated conoid, and a stamp cylinder.⁷¹⁹

106 comes from Platanos and CMS II,2 no. 201 from Agia Triada. Two more pieces come from the 'Ierapetra town', one from 'central Crete', one from 'Sampa', and another from Gournia. Since the *Agrimi 106 b* fits well with the iconography of the Mesara glyptic and its finding place is Platanos there is no reason to suppose that it was manufactured outside the Mesara. The same is the case for CMS II,2 no. 201, whose quadruped on side b is iconographically and stylistically similar to that of **106 b**, and perhaps also for CMS VII no. 1.

Tholos B of Platanos where **106** comes from was in use from EM III–MM II and House D II in Gournia where CMS II,1 no. 466 has come to light is dated to MM late (?) / LM early. The use of steatite and the fact that among the seals which are comparable to the prism there are also four-sided prisms, a shape common in MM II,⁷²⁰ would suggest a MM II dating for the piece.

KALO CHORIO AND PSYCHRO PRISMS WITH THE CABLE DEVICES

62 and **276** are manufactured in steatite (*fig. 80*). Their seal faces are trapezoidal, rectangular, or irregular whereas **62** is markedly larger than **276**. Like the Platanos Prism with the Cable Devices, both pieces are engraved freehand by motifs created by U-profiled lines that resemble cables. However, in these prisms the engraving is less regular and considerable correction can be seen at the walls of the intaglios. As opposed to the Platanos Prism with

⁷¹⁸ Four-sided prisms: CMS II,2 no. 201 (steatite [?], Agia Triada, Tholos A); CMS III no. 242 (?). Conoid: CMS VII no. 1 (soft stone [?]).

⁷¹⁹ Rectangular plates: CMS II,2 nos. 270 (?) ('Ierapetra town'), 271 (?) ('Ierapetra town'); CMS VI no. 24? (?) ('Central Crete'). Gable-shaped conoid: CMS II,1 no. 461 ('Sampa'); the term *gable-shaped conoid* has been adapted from the CMS Database. Truncated conoid: CMS XII no. 23. Stamp cylinder: CMS II,1 no. 466 (clay, Gournia, House D II). Perhaps also comparable to these pieces is the reel CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 89?

⁷²⁰ The majority of Minoan four-sided soft stone prisms are cut in steatite and belong to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group (see p. 104). An exception constitutes CMS II,1 no. 388 from Platanos which is cut in another soft stone and is engraved with the same device on all seal faces.

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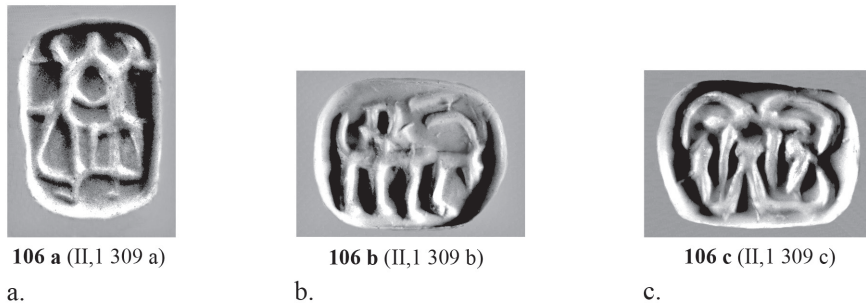


Fig. 78 The Platanos Prism with the Cable Devices.

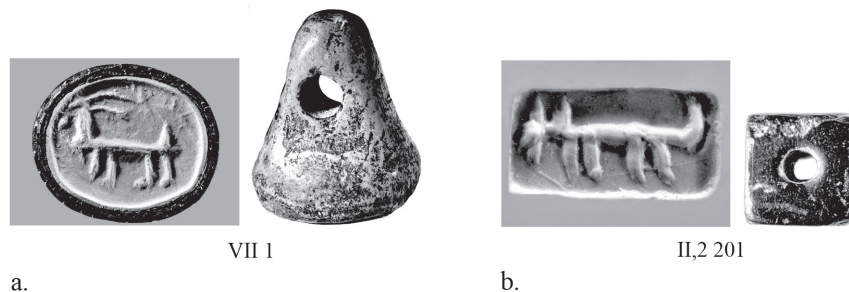


Fig. 79 Seals related to the Platanos Prism with the Cable Devices.

the Cable Devices, the devices do not touch each other and units can be clearly distinguished. The nature of the images as well as that of most of the devices is, however, unidentifiable.

Some seals of other forms also belong to the same group as the two prisms (*fig. 81*). These, a conoid, a stamp cylinder, two signets, and perhaps a horn are mostly cut in steatite, have flat seal faces, and show incomprehensible images composed of lines, circles, and blobs.⁷²¹ To the broader stylistic environment of these pieces can be added three further conoids, two discs, two stamp cylinders, and a pyramidoid.⁷²²

Worth noting is the stylistic and iconographic similarities of these pieces to a steatite seal published as archaic and whose motifs are also created by lines which resemble cables (*fig. 82*).⁷²³ In its publication, the piece is described as an amulet seal comparable to seals

⁷²¹ Conoid: CMS II,1 no. 490; perhaps also CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 427 (Rafina, road between the buildings Γ and E)? Stamp cylinder: CMS III no. 35. Signets: CMS II,1 no. 109 ('Agios Onoufrios, Tholos'); CMS III no. 36 (chlorite [?]). Horn: CMS VI no. 16 ('Kalamauka, Acropolis').

⁷²² Conoids: CMS III no. 49 (?) ('Siteia'); CMS VI no. 17 (?); CMS V no. 204 ('Knossos'). Discs: CMS II,1 nos. 214 (?) (Lentas, Tholos IIA); 426 (Phaistos, Old Palace). Stamp cylinders: CMS II,1 no. 105 (clay, 'Agios Onoufrios, Tholos'). Pyramidoid: CMS II,1 no. 113 ('Agios Onoufrios, Tholos').

⁷²³ Max Bernheimer 2007, 33 no. EG-1.

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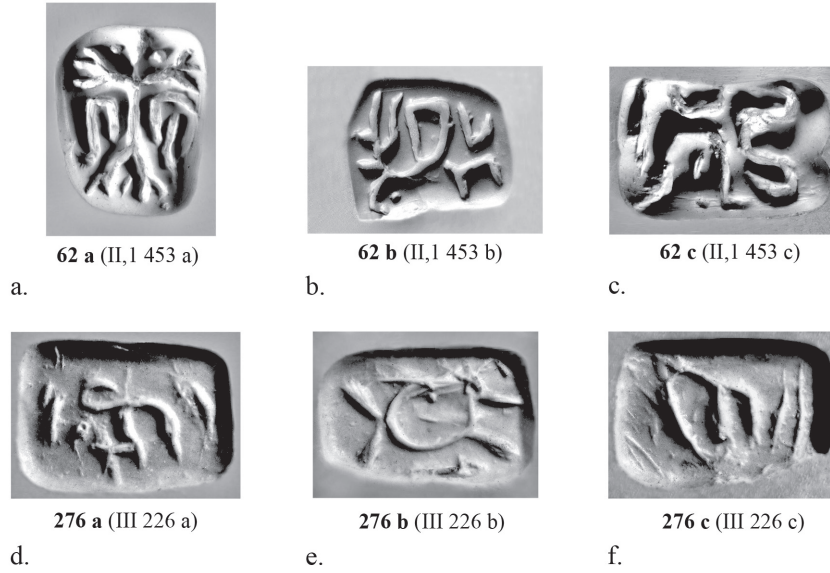


Fig. 80 The Kalo Chorio and the Psychro Prisms with the Cable Devices.

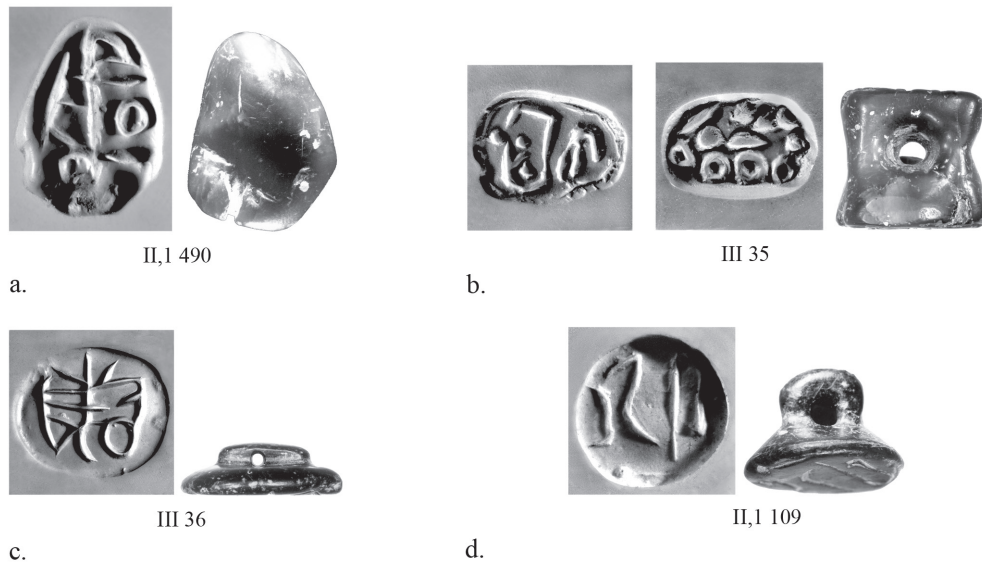


Fig. 81 Seals which are related or belong to the same group as the Kalo Chorio and the Psychro Prisms with the Cable Devices.

STYLE GROUPS

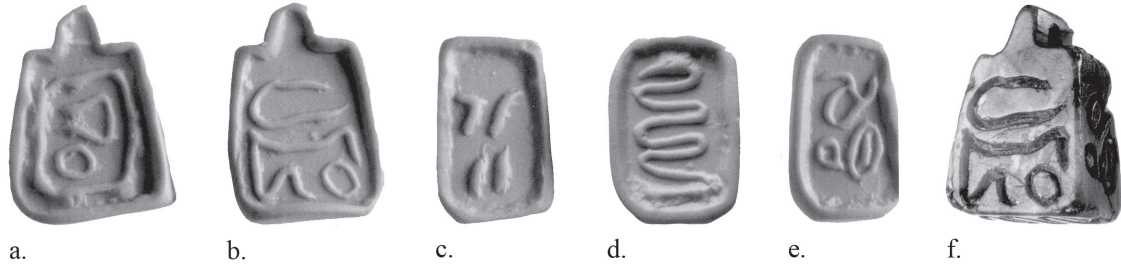


Fig. 82 An Archaic (?) steatite seal which shows stylistic and iconographic similarities to the Kalo Chorio and the Psychro Prisms with the Cable Devices (adapted from Max Bernheimer 2007, 33 no. EG-1).

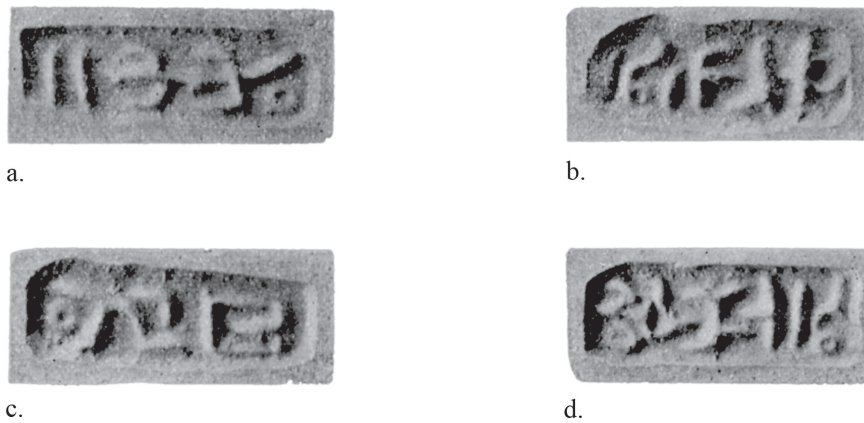


Fig. 83 Four-sided prism from a Sixth Dynasty grave in Mahâsna, Egypt (adapted from Evans 1909, 129 fig. 66).

which come from the Greek islands and especially Rhodes during the first half of the 7th century.⁷²⁴ While the nature of the depicted motifs does not rule out the possibility that such similarities could be accidental,⁷²⁵ the partly shared compositions between the Minoan seals and the seal in question would suggest that the latter, if indeed archaic,⁷²⁶ copies Minoan prototypes.⁷²⁷ Certain similarities can also be seen between the seals of the group and a Sixth Dynasty or somewhat later Egyptian four-sided prism (*fig. 83*).⁷²⁸ Since devices

⁷²⁴ Max Bernheimer 2007, 33. For the amulet seals, see Boardman 1963, 136–144.

⁷²⁵ Linear devices and circles are simple motifs which can be easily devised independently and need not always suggest contact between two traditions.

⁷²⁶ On iconographic criteria, the possibility that the piece is Minoan cannot be ruled out. However, its shape, a pyramidoidal rectangular plate with loop, is unprecedented among Minoan seals.

⁷²⁷ Compare the composition on Max Bernheimer 2007, 33 no. EG-1f (*fig. 82 b*) to those on CMS II, 1 nos. 109 (*fig. 81 d*), 214 b; CMS V no. 204.

⁷²⁸ Garstang 1989, 33–34; Evans 1909, 129 fig. 66. Compare especially the *Unidentifiable motif LIII 62 c* with the

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created by cable-like lines and circles are common in Egyptian seals,⁷²⁹ it is possible that the Minoan pieces show some Egyptian influences.

Evans saw on the crude form and linear devices of the Kalo Chorio piece a prototype for the prisms of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group and suggested a relationship of its devices with the hieroglyphic script.⁷³⁰ He saw the motifs of this piece as ‘primitive designs’ partly showing ‘an anticipation of alphabetic forms’ and spoke of ‘primitive signs of alphabetic aspect which stand in a near relation to the more advanced linear scripts of Minoan Crete’ with regard to the devices of the seals of the group.⁷³¹ It is true that the linear character of the motifs of these seals in combination with the fact that, in most cases, more than one incomprehensible device are combined on one seal face creates the impression of writing. However, the fact that the motifs can hardly be connected to any of the Cretan hieroglyphs⁷³² as well as the fact that many of them come from southern Crete where the hieroglyphic script is not common, underline the tentative character of such a connection.

The provenance of these seals does not provide hints regarding their production centres because they come from areas in the northern, southern, and eastern part of the island.⁷³³ According to its excavator, the context of CMS II,1 no. 214 is EM II. However, two blocks of the Knossos Palace with incised motifs which are stylistically similar to the devices of the Kalo Chorio prism are dated by Evans to early MM I.⁷³⁴ Moreover, the forms of the seals which belong or come close to the group and among them especially horns and steatite stamp cylinders are common in EM III/MM I.⁷³⁵ These considerations would suggest a dating of the group to early (?) MM I if not to EM III/MM I.

PLATANOS ORNAMENTAL PRISM

Although the exact identification of the material of **107** is not possible, the seemingly rough texture of its surface could be taken as an indication for the use of chlorite instead of steatite (*fig. 84*). The piece has round seal faces surrounded by deep grooves and only one

Π-shaped device on Evans 1909, 129 fig. 66 b; also the two *Parallels* **276 c** with those on Evans 1909, 129 fig. 66 d.

⁷²⁹ E.g. also Flinders Petrie 1925, pl. V no. 344.

⁷³⁰ Evans 1909, 115–116.

⁷³¹ Evans 1909, 116, 118. The group is handled in Evans 1909, 115–118.

⁷³² CMS V no. 204 is an exception because the *Saltire* is reminiscent of the CHIC sign X and the device on the other edge of the composition brings to mind the CHIC sign 034. Jasink sees on CMS VI no. 16 a possible hieroglyphic inscription (Jasink 2009, 192 tbl. 3 SM P. 14). For a table of the signs of the Cretan hieroglyphic script, see CHIC, 17.

⁷³³ From north-central Crete: CMS V no. 204 (‘Knossos’). From the Mesara: CMS II,1 nos. 105 (‘Agios Onoufrios’), 109 (‘Agios Onoufrios’), 113 (‘Agios Onoufrios’), 214 (Lentas), 426 (Phaistos). From east-central or eastern Crete: **62** (‘Kalo Chorio Pediados’); **276** (‘Psychro’); CMS III no. 49 (‘Siteia’); CMS VI no. 16 (‘Kalamauka’).

⁷³⁴ Evans 1921, 131 fig. 97, 132 fig. 98. Compare the former to **62 a** and the latter to **62 b**. The stylistic similarity of the Kalo Chorio prism to these blocks is also noted by Yule (Yule 1980 a, 68). For the dating of the blocks, see Evans 1921, 127–133.

⁷³⁵ For examples of bone/boar’s tusk/hippo ivory horns, see CMS II,1 nos. 79, 231; CMS IV no. 49; CMS X no. 7. For a soft stone example, see CMS IV no. 68 (chlorite or schist). For examples of steatite stamp cylinders, see CMS II,1 nos. 169, 305, 411, 477; CMS III nos. 33, 34.

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engraved face. The fact that the prism was deposited in a tholos suggests that the remaining faces were deliberately left unengraved. The devices, all of purely ornamental nature, are created by the combination of lines and ‘cup sinkings’ cut with vertical pressure files and drills.

Because of the simplicity of the composition on **107 a**, possible parallels do not need to always belong the same development. Most easily comparable to the compositions of this prism are the compositions on a bone animal head finial and a chlorite reel (*fig. 85 a, b*).⁷³⁶ Less easily compared to it are the compositions of a chlorite bottle with horizontal perforation on the handle, two buttons, a chlorite reel, and a steatite stamp cylinder (*fig. 85 c*).⁷³⁷ The composition of **107** and those of the above mentioned seals find some parallels among the Phaistos sealings (*fig. 86*).⁷³⁸

107 as well as the seals with similar iconography come from the Mesara. This, as well as the fact that the sealings with comparable compositions come from Phaistos, suggest that the production places of these pieces were located in the Mesara. The few existing contexts speak in favour of MM II as terminus post quem non for the production of these pieces.⁷³⁹

On account of shape and material, CMS II,1 no. 21 can be dated to the EM period. On the other hand, the use of soft stone, the representation of buttons and bottles with horizontal perforation on the handle, as well as the convex seal faces of CMS II,1 no. 152, would suggest a MM IB/MM II dating for the remaining seals.⁷⁴⁰

CENTRAL CRETE ORNAMENTAL PRISMS

2.9 % of the existing prisms belong to this group (*fig. 87*).⁷⁴¹ The majority of pieces are cut in steatite but a variety of whitish materials, i.e. some kind of paste, faience or another related substance, perhaps soft stone, and pebble stone are also used. It is possible that, initially, the pieces made of whitish materials were glazed.⁷⁴²

The seal faces of these prisms are always ellipsoidal. Often, one is markedly narrower than the other two whereas at times, the length of the seal faces is somewhat smaller than

⁷³⁶ Bone animal head finial: CMS II,1 no. 21 (Agia Triada, Tholos A). Chlorite reel: CMS II,1 no. 152 (Koumasa, Tholos A, convex seal faces).

⁷³⁷ Chlorite bottle with horizontal perforation on the handle: CMS III no. 97 (‘Apesokari’). Buttons: CMS II,1 no. 100 (soft stone, Agia Triada, Tholos A). Chlorite reel: CMS II,1 no. 116 (‘Agios Onoufrios, Tholos’). Steatite stamp cylinder: CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 270 (‘Moni Odigitria’). Compare CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 270 b to the compositions on CMS II,1 nos. 274 (bone, Platanos, Tholos B), 289 (bone, Platanos, Tholos B).

⁷³⁸ CMS II,5 nos. 70, 100 (?), 115, 120.

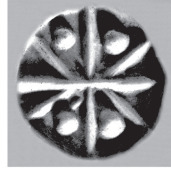
⁷³⁹ **107** comes from Tholos B or Tholos Γ of Platanos. The first was used in EM III–MM II and the second in EM III–MM I. CMS II,1 nos. 21 and 100 come from Tholos A of Agia Triada which was in use from EM II–MM II. CMS II,1 no. 152 comes from Tholos A of Koumasa which was used in EM II–MM II (?).

⁷⁴⁰ For this subject, see pp. 136–137.

⁷⁴¹ **21, 56, 83, 121, 133, 252, 258, 259, 290, 320, 328, 359, 395, 409, 442, A.2, A.5, A.10.**

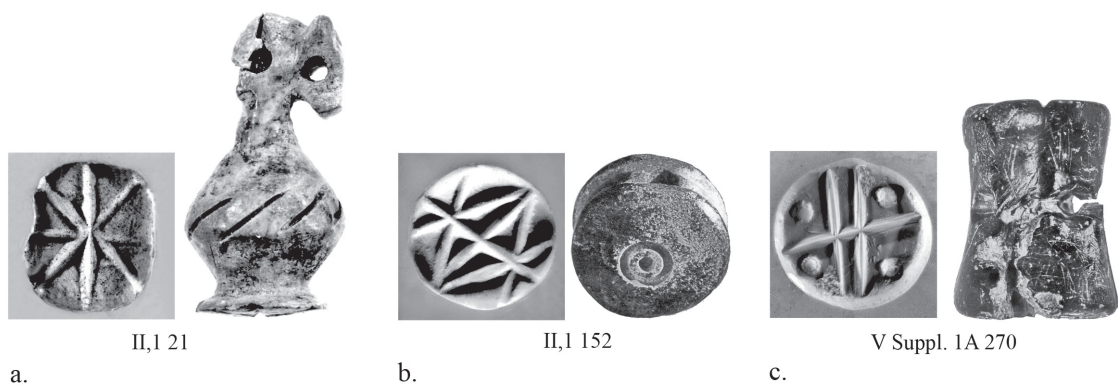
⁷⁴² For this subject, see p. 35.

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107 a (II,1 344)

Fig. 84 The Platanos Ornamental Prism.



II,1 21

II,1 152

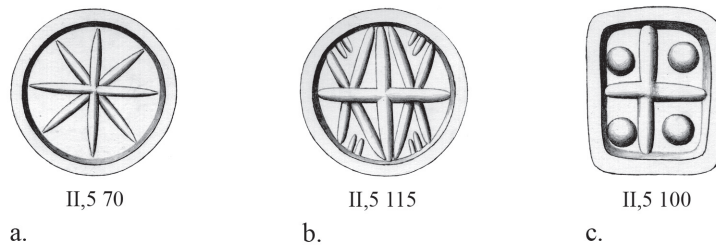
V Suppl. 1A 270

a.

b.

c.

Fig. 85 Seals with similar compositions as the Platanos Ornamental Prism.



II,5 70

II,5 115

II,5 100

a.

b.

c.

Fig. 86 Sealings with similar compositions as the Platanos Ornamental Prism.

that of the seal body.⁷⁴³ In all but one case, deep grooves surround the seal faces. **409**, which does not show such grooves, shows signs of considerable use. Such wear allows for the possibility that the initially existing grooves have been obliterated by abrasion.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴³ One seal face narrower than the other two: e.g. **21 a**, **121 a**. The length of the seal faces smaller than the seal body: e.g. **21**, **121**.

⁷⁴⁴ As is the case with **56**, **290**, **359**. On these pieces, faint short strokes on the interfacial edges and/or on the profiles are the only witnesses of the initial existence of grooves.

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As a rule, these seals are engraved with vertical pressure files and drills. The only exception to that is **121 a** whose irregular intaglios suggest that the motif was carved freehand instead (*fig. 87 d*). For individual pieces, the possibility that they were cut with tools operated on the spindle cannot be ruled out.⁷⁴⁵ The intaglios are regular, smooth, and have U- or, in the case of some ‘cup sinkings’, V-profiles. The iconographic repertoire consists of compositions of ornamental nature created by lines, centred-circles, and ‘cup sinkings’.

STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Material, iconography, and technical execution allow the division of the Central Crete Ornamental Prisms into two clusters. The first consists of pieces cut in steatite and can be named the Steatite Cluster (*fig. 87 a–h*).⁷⁴⁶ Single, double, and triple *Centred-circles* and, more rarely, *Blobs* are combined in various repetition compounds, such as *Pairs/Rows*, *Rosette patterns*, and *Cross patterns*, or function as main devices (*fig. 87 a–c, f–h*). Lines are combined in such ways that they form *Parallels*, *Grids*, or more rarely *Line combs* and *Radial hatching* (*fig. 87 d, e, g, h*). Occasionally, *Lines* stand individually and function as main devices.⁷⁴⁷

The various devices can both stand alone on the seal face or be combined with other patterns (*fig. 87*, alone: *a–e*; with other devices: *f–h*). The elements of the devices but also those of the compositions as a whole are loosely bonded such that the images have an animated and rather playful character. This is also underlined by the fact that, often, the circles of the *Centred-circles* are only partly executed such that they are actually crescents (*fig. 87 a*).⁷⁴⁸

The second cluster consists of the prisms made of whitish materials and is referred to as the White Prisms Cluster (*fig. 87 i–p*).⁷⁴⁹ Double and triple *Centred-circles*, *Parallels*, *Grids*, and *Radial hatching* are not met. *Blobs* are particularly favoured and are met either as main devices or as part of repetition compounds such as *Pairs/Rows* and *Cross patterns* (*fig. 87 j, l, m–p*). *Centred-circles* function as main devices or as basic elements of *Pairs/Rows* (*fig. 87 i–l*). *Line combs* are very common, whereas *Line Ks*, and *Simple grids* are also met (*fig. 87 k–o*).

Whereas compositions put together of only *Centred-circles* and/or *Blobs* are met,⁷⁵⁰ repetition compounds composed of *Centred-circles* or *Blobs* never stand alone on the seal face. More to the point, no images put together exclusively of devices composed of lines

⁷⁴⁵ For this subject, see pp. 45–46.

⁷⁴⁶ **21, 56, 83, 121, 133, 259, 290, 320, 359, 409, 442, A.2, A.10.**

⁷⁴⁷ E.g. **21 a**.

⁷⁴⁸ For this subject, see pp. 46–47, 273.

⁷⁴⁹ **252, 258, 328, 395, A.5.**

⁷⁵⁰ E.g. **328 c, 395 b.**

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Fig. 87 Central Crete Ornamental Prisms: a.–h. the Steatite Cluster; i.–p. the White Prisms Cluster.

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are met. *Line combs*, *Line Ks*, and *Simple grids* are always combined with *Centred-circles* and/or *Blobs* on the seal face (fig. 87 k–o).

The devices are executed with more care than those of the previous cluster. Semi-finished circles are absent, whereas more often than in the Steatite Cluster, the *Blobs* have a conical profile. The characteristically broad and particularly regular intaglios create the impression of the employment of tools operated on the spindle.⁷⁵¹

395 from Midea stands out on account of both iconography and technical execution (fig. 87 o–p). As opposed to the rest of the prisms of the group, the compositions are static. The *Centred-circles* and the *Blobs* of **395 a** and **395 c** are distributed on two sides of a *Simple grid* (fig. 87 o). In contrast to all other White Prisms, the intaglios are medium deep, the lines are thin, and the *Blobs* have U- instead of V-profiles.

These differences in combination with the fact that the piece has been found outside Crete could be seen as indicative of a non-Minoan origin. In the case that this were true, the piece could be a MH seal which copies a Minoan White Prism. The glossiness which faience would have in its original state could suggest an attempt to create a similarly looking piece to the, possibly originally glazed, White Prisms.

However, iconographic and stylistic considerations would speak in favour of the Minoan origin of the piece. The composition on **395 b** is easily comparable to the composition on the soft stone Petschaft CMS II,1 no. 335 (fig. 88 i).⁷⁵² The static compositions of **395 a** and **395 c** find parallels to those on an unpublished steatite signet at the Heraklion Museum, on CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 270 b which belongs to a steatite stamp cylinder, on the conoid CMS II,2 no. 61, and on an unpublished chlorite button at the Heraklion Museum (fig. 85 c).⁷⁵³ Moreover, the composition on CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 270 a is not very different from that on **395 b**. The fact that the patterns on CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 270 b and the aforementioned chlorite button are also comparable to a certain extent to the composition of the Platanos Ornamental Prism could suggest that the latter and the White Prisms belong to the same glyptic tradition.

SEALS OF OTHER SHAPES RELATED TO THE CENTRAL CRETE ORNAMENTAL PRISMS

A large number of seals of other shapes are related to the Central Crete Ornamental Prisms and form with them the Central Crete Ornamental Group (fig. 88).⁷⁵⁴ Numerous steatite pieces come close to the first cluster whereas only a handful of examples, also partly made of steatite, are rather closer to the second. The boundaries between the two are not always clear and often, pieces attached to one are also related to the other. The seal faces of these

⁷⁵¹ For this subject, see pp. 45–47.

⁷⁵² From Platanos, Tholos B.

⁷⁵³ CMS II,2 no. 61: Knossos, Profitis Ilias Cemetery, Grave VII; CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 270: ‘Moni Odigitria’. The two unpublished seals also come from locations in southern Crete.

⁷⁵⁴ For this group, see also Thomas 2000, 306–307.

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seals are either flat or, more rarely, convex. The group consists of 24 % prisms and 76 % seals of other shapes.

The majority of the seals which come close to the steatite prisms are Petschafte and discoids.⁷⁵⁵ Pyramidal signets, buttons, discs, scaraboids, cushions, rectangular plates, and crosses follow.⁷⁵⁶ Finally, to the same cluster belong also a foot, a conoid, a half-conoid, a foliate back, a planoconvex seal, and a lentoid.⁷⁵⁷ Close to the second cluster are a gable with three engraved sides and a cushion as well as a signet and a Petschaft which, as has been noted above, can be connected with **395**.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁵ Petschafte: CMS II,2 nos. 27 (Tylisos, Houses), 44 (slightly convex seal face [?], Knossos, Profitis Ilias Cemetery, Grave V), 64 (convex seal face, Knossos, Profitis Ilias Cemetery, Grave VIII); CMS X no. 273 (slightly convex seal face, 'Crete'); CMS XI no. 289 (slightly convex seal face, Agia Triada, Tholos A); CMS XII no. 53. Also CMS II,1 no. 334 (Platanos, Tholos Γ); CMS II,2 no. 202 ('Phaistos'); CMS III no. 108 ('Malia'); CMS V no. 285 (Apodoulou, Mansion, Room near H); CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 323 ('Moni Odigitria'). Perhaps also CMS XII no. 52? Discoids: CMS II,2 no. 51 (Knossos, Profitis Ilias Cemetery, Grave VI); CMS IV no. 81 ('Phaistos'); CMS VII nos. 25, 27; Dimopoulou 2000, 32 no. 7 (Poros Katsampas, Psychogioudakis plot, filling deposit of a well). Also CMS II,2 no. 5 (Kamilari, Tholos); CMS III no. 116; CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 363 (Akrotiri Thiras, 'West house, ground levelled Room 5'); CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 146 ('Moni Odigitria'). CMS VI no. 160 is close to the cluster but its composition is different from the ones met on the existing prisms.

⁷⁵⁶ Pyramidal signets: CMS II,2 nos. 49 (Knossos, Profitis Ilias Cemetery, Grave V), 330; CMS VIII no. 26; CMS XII no. 54. CMS III nos. 69, 70 ('Tylisos'), 71 ('Knossos') are close to the cluster but their compositions are different from the ones encountered on the existing prisms. Buttons: CMS II,2 no. 74 (Episkopi, Kefala, Grave B); CMS IV nos. 77 ('Kamilari'), 80 ('Miamou'); CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 322 ('Moni Odigitria'); CMS XII no. 36 (steatite [?], elongated handle); Sakellarakis – Sakellaraki 1980, pl. 222 up left (slightly convex seal face, Archanes, burial building 16); Lempesi 1987, 287 fig. 10 (schist [?], Sympyri Viannou, Sanctuary of Hermes and Afrodite). CMS XII no. 69 is close to the cluster but its composition is different than the ones met on the existing prisms. Discs: CMS II,2 no. 253 (Mochlos, Grave XVI); CMS III no. 117; CMS XII no. 76; Popham et al. 1984, pl. 186 (d) H 259 (Knossos, Unexplored Mansion); also CMS III no. 118. Scaraboids: CMS II,1 no. 154 (?) (Koumasa, Tholos A); CMS II,2 no. 84 (Malia, Quartier Θ); CMS XII no. 75; Dimopoulou 2000, 32 no. 6 (Poros Katsampas, Psychogioudakis plot, pit), 34 no. 19 (Poros Katsampas, 'Building with Frescoes'); perhaps also CMS VIII no. 27. Cushions: CMS III no. 148 (?) ('Lasithi'); CMS IV no. 84? ('Mesara'); CMS X no. 60; CMS XI no. 145 ('Knossos'). Rectangular plates: CMS I no. 427; CMS XII no. 81. Crosses: CMS III nos. 29, 30.

⁷⁵⁷ Foot: CMS X no. 55. Conoid: CMS IV no. 76 ('Malia'). Half-conoid: CMS II,1 no. 164 (Koumasa, Tholos B). Foliate back: CMS IX no. 27. Planoconvex seal: CMS II,1 no. 501. The term *planoconvex seal* is borrowed from the designation of the seal shapes in the CMS Database. Lentoid: CMS X no. 57.

⁷⁵⁸ Gable with three engraved sides: CMS II,2 no. 53 (Knossos, Profitis Ilias Cemetery, Grave VI). Cushion: Dimopoulou 2000, 36 no. 28 (white paste, Poros Katsampas, Seal and Jewellery Workshop in a late LM IA building). Signet: unpublished (kept at the Heraklion Museum). Petschaft: CMS II,1 no. 335 (soft stone, Platanos). Perhaps also CMS II,2 no. 39 (soft stone, Knossos, Mauro Spilaio Cemetery, Grave XVII, Chamber B)? A group of buttons and discoids which are made of chlorite or, more rarely, schist also belongs to the same tradition as the Central Crete Ornamental Prisms (Buttons: CMS II,2 nos. 38 [slightly convex seal face, chlorite, Knossos, Mauro Spilaio Cemetery, Grave XVII, Chamber B], 66 [chlorite, Knossos, Profitis Ilias Cemetery, Grave IX], 278 [slightly convex seal face, chlorite [?], 'Lithines']; CMS III nos. 84 [chlorite], 85 [schist [?]]. Discoids: CMS I no. 431 [serpentine or schist]; CMS III no. 138 [chlorite, 'Knossos']; CMS XI no. 216 [chlorite 'Agios Giannis']). These pieces constitute part of a somewhat different development in which chlorite/schist and compositions composed of groups of fan-shaped *Radial hatching* combined with *Centred-circles* are favoured (for further examples of seals of this group, see the buttons CMS II,2 no. 149; CMS VI no. 115. Also the gable-shaped button CMS II,1 no. 486 [the term *gable-*

STYLE GROUPS

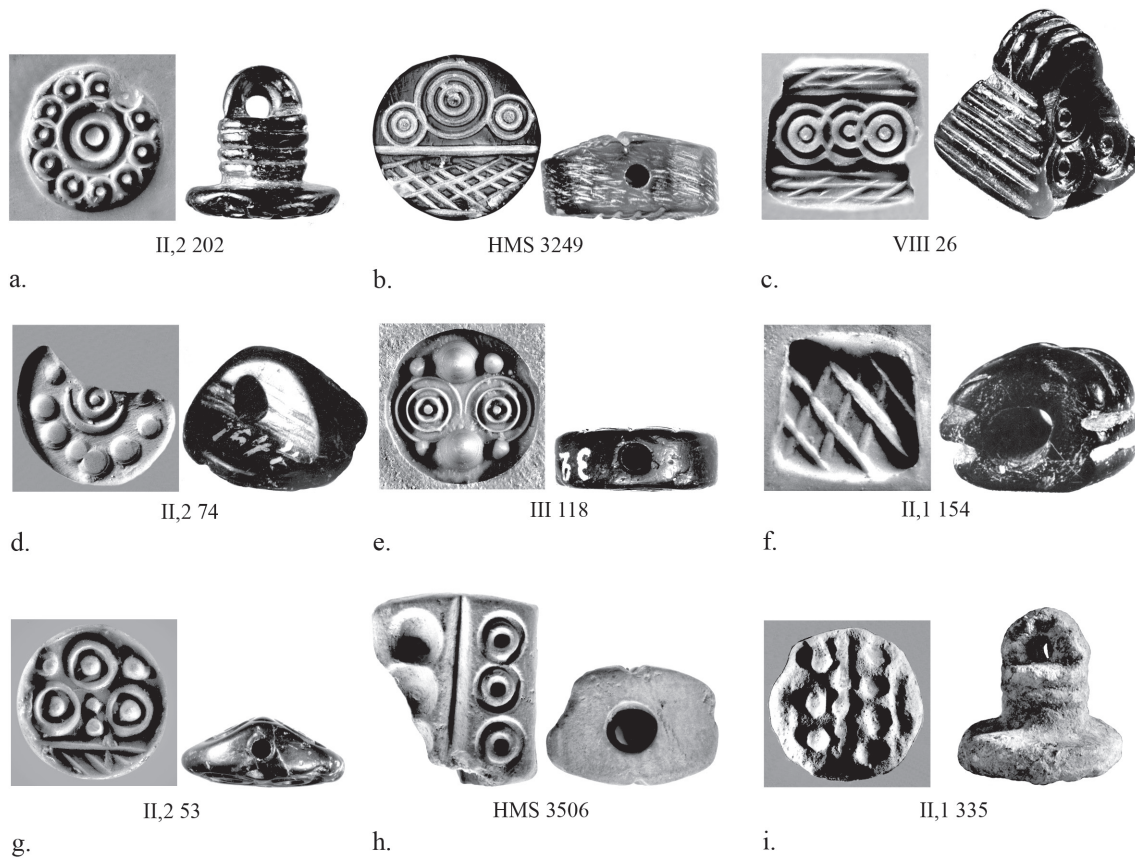


Fig. 88 Other seals of the Central Crete Ornamental Group: a.–f. the Steatite Cluster; g.–i. the White Prisms Cluster.

The compositions of the seals of the Central Crete Ornamental Group can be divided into three rough groups. The first group consists of those compositions whose devices are composed of only ‘cup sinkings’, centred-circles, or lines (*figs. 87 a–e; 88 a, f, i*). The second kind of compositions combine in segmented images devices built of ‘cup sinkings’, centred-circles, or lines. Because each of the devices occupies one part and edge of the seal face and does not intermingle with the rest, each can be observed as a separate unit (*fig. 87 h; 88 b*).⁷⁵⁹ In the third kind of compositions, devices composed of ‘cup sinkings’, centred-circles, or lines are intermingled with each other such that coherent inseparable compositions result (*fig. 87 k, m–o*).⁷⁶⁰

shaped button is borrowed from the nomenclature of the seal shapes in the CMS Database]. And especially the discoids CMS III nos. 136, 137; CMS VI no. 161; CMS IX no. 28; CMS XIII no. 93).

⁷⁵⁹ E.g. 56 b, 290 b, 320 b, 442 c.

⁷⁶⁰ E.g. 21 a, 259 a, 320 a, 290 a.

STYLE GROUPS

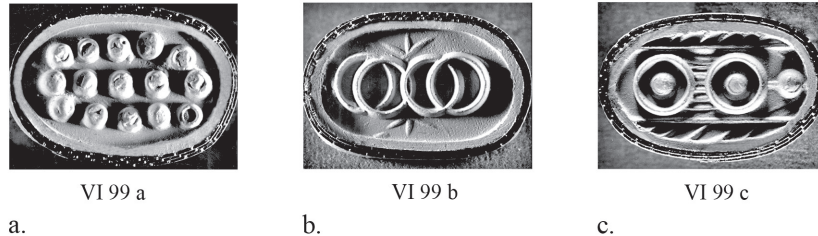


Fig. 89 A hard stone three-sided prism related to the Central Crete Ornamental Group.

A HARD STONE THREE-SIDED PRISM RELATED TO THE CENTRAL CRETE ORNAMENTAL PRISMS

CMS VI no. 99, cut in ‘unnaturally white’ agate⁷⁶¹ with tools operated on the spindle, comes close to the White Prisms Cluster (*fig. 89*). The seal faces of the piece are surrounded by deep grooves. The compositions of CMS VI no. 99 a and CMS VI no. 99 c are easily comparable to similar compositions on the White Prisms.⁷⁶² On the other hand, CMS VI no. 99 c does not fit comfortably within the cluster or the Central Crete Ornamental Group. This is because *Circles* created by the tubular drill and ‘*Lily flowers*’ are foreign to this group. It has been mentioned that drilled *Circles* are met only in connection with medium-hard and hard stone seals.⁷⁶³ The combination on this piece of devices typical of soft stone seals with those characteristic of hard stone seals attests to the overlapping of the two traditions.⁷⁶⁴

SEALINGS IMPRESSED BY CENTRAL CRETE ORNAMENTAL SEALS

Most impressions which can be attributed to seals of the group come from Phaistos (*fig. 90 a–f*). The majority of those were impressed from seals of the Steatite Cluster which had rectangular and round seal faces, although other shapes are also represented (*fig. 90 a–c*).⁷⁶⁵ The White Prisms Cluster is represented by fewer sealings impressed by ellipsoidal, round, and rectangular seal faces (*fig. 90 d–f*).⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶¹ CMS VI. The piece comes from ‘Papoura’.

⁷⁶² Compare for example CMS VI no. 99 a to **395 c**; CMS VI no. 99 c to **258 c, A.5 a**.

⁷⁶³ For this subject, see pp. 37, 42–43, 109, also footnote 552.

⁷⁶⁴ Typical of soft stone seals: CMS VI nos. 99 a, 99 c. Characteristic of hard stone seals: CMS VI no. 99 b.

⁷⁶⁵ Rectangular: CMS II,5 nos. 4, 31, 32 (?), 34, 47, 48 (?), 50 (?). Round: CMS II,5 nos. 12 (?), 14, 56, 58, 111, 129, 130. Also CMS II,5 nos. 128 and 131? Or are these impressed by chlorite/schist seals of the group discussed on footnote 758? Rosette-shaped: CMS II,5 nos. 62, 127. Ellipsoidal: CMS II,5 no. 30. Quadrangular: CMS II,5 no. 61 (?). In cases such as CMS II,5 no. 1 (somewhat convex seal face), 3 (somewhat convex seal face), 6, 9, 11 it is not possible to define whether the intaglios belonged to seals which were connected to the group.

⁷⁶⁶ Round: CMS II,5 nos. 23 (somewhat convex seal face), 28, 112. Perhaps also CMS II,5 nos. 22, 24 (somewhat convex seal face), 36, 101, 121? Rectangular: CMS II,5 nos. 26, 27. Ellipsoidal: CMS II,5 no. 16. CMS II,5 nos. 97–99 from Phaistos and Kanta 1999, pl. LXXXIV Mo 441 left from Monastiraki are close to the seals of the group

STYLE GROUPS

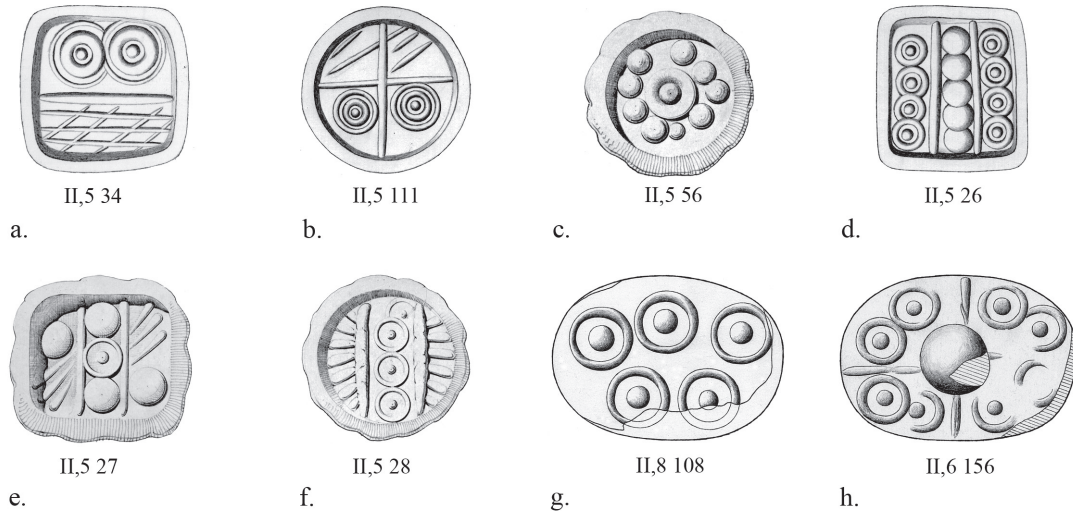


Fig. 90 Sealings of the Central Crete Ornamental Group.

Apart from those, two ellipsoidal sealings from Knossos, one from Gournia, and perhaps one from Malia also show compositions more or less comparable to the compositions of seals of the group (*fig. 90 g, h*).⁷⁶⁷

DISTRIBUTION

The find spots of prisms with secure provenance are situated in central Crete (*fig. 91 a*). 50 % of these pieces come from the Knossos – Heraklion area, 17 % were recovered in the Mesara, and 33 % were found in places outside Crete. When the pieces with insecure provenance are also considered, 46 % of the prisms come from the Knossos – Heraklion district, 18 % from the Mesara, 18 % from locations in east-central and eastern Crete, and 18 % from places outside Crete (*fig. 91 b*).

The distribution of the seals of other shapes paints a similar picture. Further find places are now Mochlos, Symi Viannou, Lasithi, Archanes, Tylisos, Episkopi, Apodoulou, Phaistos,

but their compositions differ from those met there. Compare these sealings for example to CMS VI no. 160.

⁷⁶⁷ Knossos: CMS II,8 nos. 59 (?), 108. The loose combination of the *Centred-circles* on CMS II,8 no. 108 is somewhat foreign to the group. However, the flat ellipsoidal seal face is indicative of a prism whereas the fact that the *Centred-circles* are put together in an irregular, non-static composition brings the latter close to the playful and motioned compositions of the group (on the other hand, the static composition on CMS II,8 no. 107 fits better with the compositions of some LM rectangular plates, such as CMS II,4 no. 68 a and CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 218 a). CMS II,8 no. 59 finds a distant parallel to **395 b** and CMS II,1 no. 335. Gournia: CMS II,6 no. 156. Malia: CMS II,6 no. 207 (?).

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and Akrotiti Thiras. 48 % of the pieces with secure provenance come from north-central Crete, 32 % from south-central Crete, 12 % from east-central and eastern Crete, 4 % from north-western Crete and 4 % from outside Crete. When seals with insecure provenance are also considered, the seals which come from south-central Crete are represented by 45 %, from north-central Crete by 34 %, from east-central and eastern Crete by 15 %, from outside Crete by 3 %, and from north-western Crete by 3 %.

It has been noted above that the majority of sealings which can be attributed to seals of the group have been recovered in Phaistos. Two possible examples have also come to light in Knossos whereas individual pieces have been found in Gournia and perhaps Malia.

The evidence suggests that the production centres of these seals were located in central Crete. Pieces recovered outside this area were probably imports from there.⁷⁶⁸ The distribution of steatite seals with segmented compositions composed of *Grids* and *Centred-circles*⁷⁶⁹ suggests that these were produced in the Knossos – Heraklion area. Their workshop as well as that of some other steatite seals with similar iconography⁷⁷⁰ could perhaps be localised at Poros Katsampas. In this area two workshop fresh steatite seals of the group have come to light⁷⁷¹ as well as a seal and jewellery workshop of a later period.⁷⁷² Two seals of the White Prisms Cluster which have been recovered in Poros Katsampas must also have been produced there.⁷⁷³ The large amount of seals that come from the Knossos – Heraklion area makes the scarcity of corresponding sealings from Knossos stand out.

Perhaps connected with south-central Crete are steatite seals whose compositions are somewhat more elaborate than those of the above mentioned pieces and which show greater care for precision.⁷⁷⁴ The fact that some of these pieces come from the south-central part of the island and that their compositions find parallels with numerous sealings from Phaistos⁷⁷⁵ could suggest that elaboration and greater care for precision on steatite seals is connected with the south part of central Crete.

⁷⁶⁸ However, the possibility cannot be ruled out that CMS II,2 no. 84, which was found in Malia constitutes a local product (an imitation of a Central Crete Ornamental Seal?). For seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group with similar compositions, see pp. 98–99.

⁷⁶⁹ E.g. **A.2** ('Knossos'); CMS II,2 nos. 51 (Knossos), 64 (Knossos); CMS XI no. 145 ('Knossos'); Popham et al. 1984, pl. 186 (d) H 259 (Knossos); Dimopoulou 2000, 32 no. 7 (Poros Katsampas); 34 no. 19 (Poros Katsampas). CMS II,2 no. 27 comes from Tylios which is not far from the district in question. CMS II,2 no. 253 from Mochlos and CMS XI no. 289 from Agia Triada could be seen as imports from the north-central part of the island. For the compositions met on the Central Crete Ornamental Seals, see p. 154.

⁷⁷⁰ Compare for example **133** from Knossos to **259** from Poros Katsampas.

⁷⁷¹ **259**; Dimopoulou 2000, 32 no. 7. Also from the same area is Dimopoulou 2000, 34 no. 19 which is only somewhat abraded, as well as Dimopoulou 2000, 32 no. 6.

⁷⁷² Late LM I (Dimopoulou 2000, 35–36). For the dating of the seals of the group, see pp. 158–159.

⁷⁷³ **258** and Dimopoulou 2000, 36 no. 28.

⁷⁷⁴ E.g. CMS II,2 nos. 5 (Kamilari), 202 ('Phaistos'); CMS III nos. 116, 118.

⁷⁷⁵ Compare the compositions of the above mentioned pieces for example to those on CMS II,5 nos. 11, 12, 14, 58, 111, 130.

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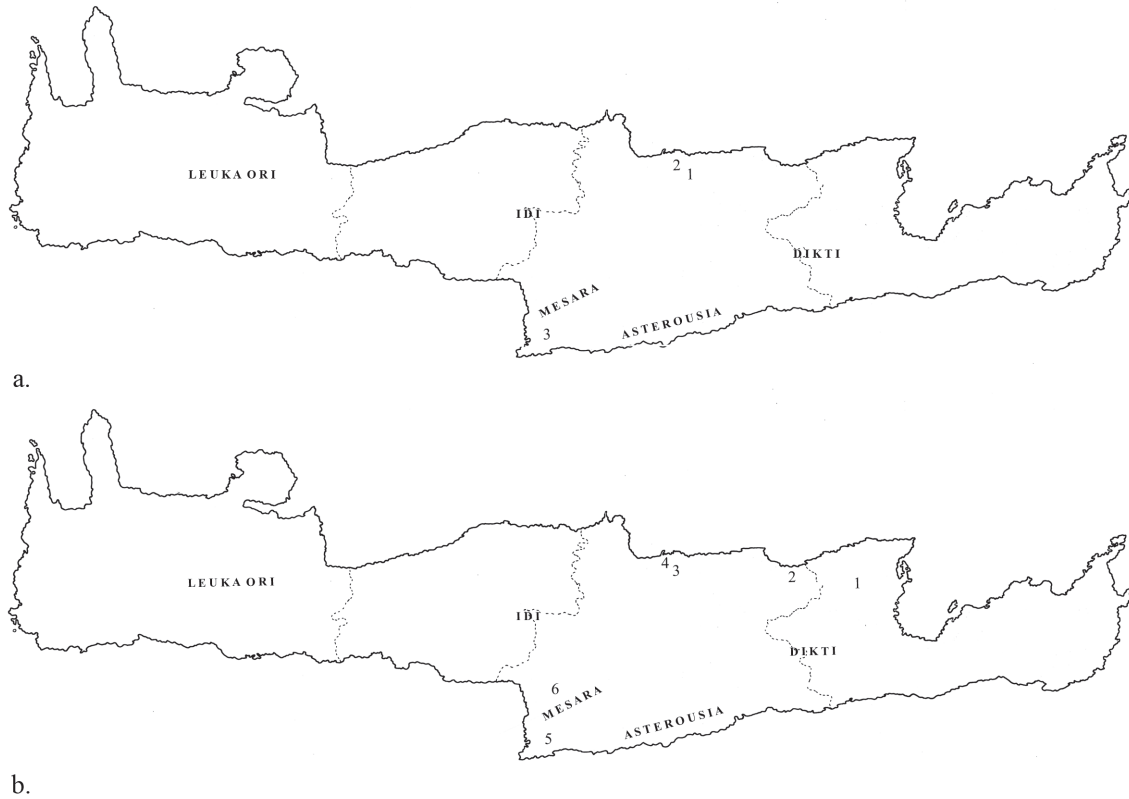


Fig. 91 Distribution of the Central Crete Ornamental Prisms: a. find places of prisms with secure provenance: 1. Knossos; 2. Heraklion; 3. Moni Odigitria; (4. Agia Eirini, Kea; 5. Midea, Argolida). b. find places of prisms with secure and uncertain provenance: 1. Mirampelo; 2. Malia; 3. Knossos; 4. Heraklion; 5. Moni Odigitria; 6. Mesara; (7. Agia Eirini, Kea; 8. Midea, Argolida).

DATING

According to the excavator, one prism comes from the upper layers of an EM III/MM IA pottery context.⁷⁷⁶ The contexts of the remaining prisms are dated to MM II, MM III, middle to late MBA which possibly corresponds to MM IIB/MM IIIA, and MM IIIB/LM IA.⁷⁷⁷

Among the seals of other forms, one piece came to light in a grave used from EM I/EM II–MM I.⁷⁷⁸ According to its respective excavators, another seal comes from an EM II–MM

⁷⁷⁶ 252.

⁷⁷⁷ MM II: 259. MM III: 133. Middle to late MBA possibly corresponding to MM IIB/MM IIIA: 359. MM IIIB/LM IA: 258.

⁷⁷⁸ CMS II,1 no. 164.

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I context and a third from a building used in MM IA.⁷⁷⁹ Five pieces have come to light in constructions which were in use during EM–MM II, MM IA/MM II, and MM IB–MM IIIB.⁷⁸⁰ The contexts of five pieces are dated to MM II/MM III, those of three to MM III and those of further individual seals to MM IIIB/LM IA, late LM IA, LM, and LM III.⁷⁸¹

This evidence points to MM II/MM III, and perhaps more MM III, as the period of floruit of the seals of the group. The recovery of a White Prism which is workshop fresh from a MM IIIB/LM IA context and of a cushion of the same cluster from a late LM IA context could suggest that some pieces were still being produced at the end of MM III/early LM IA.⁷⁸² In favour of this could also speak the fact that two steatite pieces of the group have come to light in contexts of this period. The fact that the aforementioned cushion is the only seal from a late LM IA context as well as the lack of other such seals from further LM contexts suggests that the group ceased to be produced after the early LM I. One piece recovered in a LM III context should be seen as an heirloom or chance Postpalatial find.

The stylistic similarities of the four pieces reported to have been recovered in contexts used no later than MM I with a large number of seals which come from MM II/MM III contexts could be taken as an indication that the contexts of the four pieces were used later in the MM period. This would seem very possible especially for **252** whose affiliation with the White Prisms Cluster would not justify such an early date.⁷⁸³ Moreover, the use of steatite as well as the shapes of the seals affiliated to the group would suggest that the production of these pieces became popular after MM I. While no seals typical of MM I are met, Petschafte are characteristic MM II shapes whereas discoids, pyramidal signets, and cushions with thick rims are typical of the MM II/MM III glyptic.

To summarise then, the group can be dated to MM II–MM III/early LM IA. The few seals whose contexts are dated no later than MM I either represent the first representatives of a development which became popular in later times; or, more probably, are indications that their contexts were used later in the MM period.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁷⁹ EM II–MM I context: CMS II,2 no. 253. Building used in MM IA: Sakellarakis – Sakellaraki 1980, pl. 222 up left.

⁷⁸⁰ EM–MM II: CMS II,1 no. 154; CMS XI no. 289. MM IA/MM II: CMS II,1 nos. 335, 344. MM IB–MM IIIB: CMS II,2 no. 5. For the dating of Koumasa Tholos A, where CMS II,1 no. 154 comes from, later in MM than MM I, see p. 381.

⁷⁸¹ MM II/MM III: CMS II,2 nos. 44, 49, 51, 53; Dimopoulou 2000, 32 no. 7. MM III: CMS II,2 nos. 61, 64, 66. MM IIIB/LM IA: Dimopoulou 2000, 34 no. 19. Late LM IA: Dimopoulou 2000, 36 no. 28. LM: Popham et al. 1984, pl. 186 (d) H 259. LM III: CMS II,2 no. 74.

⁷⁸² However, the fact that the agate three-sided prism CMS VI no. 99 which is affiliated to the cluster is dated to MM II could suggest that the pieces of the cluster were manufactured in MM II/MM III. The use of hard stone, the flat seal faces, and the combination of soft stone and hard stone iconography place CMS VI no. 99 in MM II.

⁷⁸³ This is because **258** and Dimopoulou 2000, 36 no. 28 of this cluster cannot be dated earlier than MM II. For this subject, see also pp. 45–46.

⁷⁸⁴ For the impact of these seal groupings on the understanding of MM Crete, see the section ‘Conclusions’, pp. 371–375.