

### APPENDIX 3: DISCUSSION OF FOUR PIECES EXCLUDED FROM THIS STUDY

625 prisms and 1786 seal faces have been examined in this study. The reasons for the exclusion of four pieces, which might raise questions, are provided below. **28** was included in the catalogue at an early stage of the research. At a later point, it became clear to the author that the piece is not Minoan but Mycenaean. It is therefore excluded from the discussion which pertains to the MM prisms and from the iconography.

The seal, which is cut in black steatite, has elongated rectangular seal faces which are not surrounded by grooves. The intaglios are medium deep and have V-shaped profiles created by the combination of two slanting cuts. Board-like ‘blanks’ and ‘cup sinkings’ are not met. The three faces are adorned with descriptive images whose motifs are schematically and for the most part linearly rendered.

While comparable depictions of human figures, ruminants, and *Heads of a ‘ram’* are met on MM prisms, they are stylistically very different from the ones engraved on the prism in question.<sup>2449</sup> The best Minoan parallel for the images met on this piece is the linearly executed human figure CMS II,2 no. 204 a whose head also takes the shape of an inverted triangle. However, much better stylistic and iconographic parallels find the devices of this seal among seals of the ‘Mainland Popular Group’.<sup>2450</sup>

The figure **28 a** is well comparable to those of the lentoid CMS I no. 42 from Mycenae.<sup>2451</sup> The pose of the figure finds a parallel also to the pose of the figures CMS I no. 369. The “*Dumbbells*” either side of these figures bring to mind the similar motifs on **28 a**.<sup>2452</sup> Turning to the horned quadruped **28 b**, this finds numerous stylistic parallels among the Mycenaean pieces, e.g. CMS V nos. 315, 377; CMS X no. 314; CMS XI no. 212. Animals in such Mycenaean seals often have extended front legs and bent back legs as well as horizontal and slightly downwards curving horns which curve upwards at the ends.<sup>2453</sup> More to the point, characteristic of such Mycenaean compositions are the rows of triangles in front of the back and front legs of the animal as well as in front of its face.<sup>2454</sup> Also, the V-profiled

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<sup>2449</sup> Compare for example the second figure **187 a**, the *Agrimi* **279 a**, and the *Heads of a ‘ram’* **469 c**.

<sup>2450</sup> The group is dated to LH IIIA–LH IIIC (Dickers 2001, 6–9). For the characteristics of the group, see Dickers 2001, 6.

<sup>2451</sup> Compare also the figures CMS I no. 195 from Dendra and CMS V no. 11 from Perdika, Aigina.

<sup>2452</sup> “*Dumbbells*” placed on either side of the motif are not uncommon on late Mycenaean seals, e.g. CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 11.

<sup>2453</sup> See Dickers 2001, pls. 3–11.

<sup>2454</sup> See for example CMS V nos. 3, 339, 402, 512; CMS XI no. 212.

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intaglios of the *Heads of a 'ram'* **28 c**, as well as their almost triangular shape with the broad foreheads and thin and elongated muzzles, are reminiscent of similar devices encountered on late Mycenaean lentoids such as CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 22; CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 188; and CMS IX no. 199.

Further indications of a Mycenaean origin to the piece are the fact that it is made of black steatite, which is the most commonly used stone for seals of the 'Mainland Popular Group',<sup>2455</sup> and the information that it comes from 'Attica'. However, its three-sided prismatic shape remains unique among the seals of the 'Mainland Popular Group'.<sup>2456</sup> While four-sided prisms and rectangular plates of the 'Mainland Popular Group' do exist, each two or all four faces of such seals are engraved with similar images.<sup>2457</sup> For that reason, the piece is better comparable with a group of mainly steatite lentoids with representational devices.<sup>2458</sup>

CMS VI no. 39 has three acute corners, three flat engraved seal faces, and an axial stringhole channel. Due to the fact that it has two broader and one narrower seal face, it could be described as a wedge-shaped three-sided prism. However, it is seen as a variation on a gable because stylistically it belongs to Yule's Border/Leaf Complex.<sup>2459</sup> Gables are common in this complex but canonical three-sided prisms are not met.<sup>2460</sup>

The profile of CMS II,3 no. 96 is at first glance similar to that of the MM prisms. However, the material and iconography of the piece speak in favour of an early LM origin. While the material of which the piece is made, serpentine, is never met in connection with MM prisms, it is commonly used in LM glyptic.<sup>2461</sup> More to the point, the configuration of the bird CMS II,3 no. 96 a brings to mind some talismanic birds with outstretched wings.<sup>2462</sup> In addition, the rendition of the round nostrils on the bull's head CMS II,3 no. 96 c represents a common LM iconographical trend.<sup>2463</sup> Moreover, the habit of using centred-circles for the eyes does not appear in connection with prisms but is encountered on the LM CMS II,3 no. 149. The bird CMS II,3 no. 96 b finds both MM and LM parallels.<sup>2464</sup>

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<sup>2455</sup> Dickers 2001, 10; Walter Müller, pers. comm.

<sup>2456</sup> **395** which has come to light in Midea is possibly MM. For the relevant discussion, see p. 152.

<sup>2457</sup> See for example CMS I Suppl. no. 60; CMS V nos. 397, 420, 448.

<sup>2458</sup> For several examples of such pieces, see Dickers 2001, pls. 3–20.

<sup>2459</sup> See for example the 'cuts shaped like V's' on CMS VI no. 39 b, a device associated with the so called 'Archanes Script' which is encountered on seals of this complex (Yule 1980 a, 170).

<sup>2460</sup> Yule 1980 a, 170, 210. For other seals of the complex, see the gables CMS II,1 no. 389; CMS II,2 nos. 215, 311 and the conoids CMS II,1 no. 378; CMS III no. 75. For the Border/Leaf Complex, see Yule 1980 a, 209–210. For a further break down of this complex and revised dating, see Sbonias 1995, 102–118.

<sup>2461</sup> See for example CMS II,3 nos. 14, 17, 28, 32, 35, 36, 37.

<sup>2462</sup> E.g. CMS III nos. 488, 489; CMS XII no. 162 b as well as similar LM birds which are carved on soft stone seals, e.g. CMS II,3 nos. 94, 356; CMS III no. 482; CMS XII no. 254.

<sup>2463</sup> Compare CMS II,3 nos. 149, 255, 338; CMS XII no. 62 a. The only animal's head with similar nostrils met on prisms is **55 b**, a piece whose iconography has a progressive character (for this subject, see p. 96).

<sup>2464</sup> It is for example comparable to a certain extent to the MM birds **388 b**; CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 313; CMS X no. 47; CMS XI no. 12 a; but also to the LM CMS XIII no. 122.

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CMS II,2 no. 79 from Malia, possibly made of pseudo-jasper, is connected to hard stone engraving. Despite its poor state of preservation which does not allow a clear estimation of the employed technique, the engraving on CMS II,2 no. 79 b brings it close to the breccia three-sided prisms CMS II,2 nos. 168 and 150 which are cut on the horizontal spindle.<sup>2465</sup> It is suspected that the same technique, at least partly, has been used for cutting the piece in question. The handles of the vessels and the ‘cup sinkings’ are created with fast rotating drills, although the walls of the intaglios are not always as smooth as those of the breccia examples. The elements that connect the ‘cup sinkings’ on sides CMS II,2 no. 79 a and 79 c are probably executed freehand by gouging although the use of fast rotation and subsequent freehand abrasive action cannot be ruled out. On the other hand, the handle of the “*Dumbbell*” CMS II,2 no. 79 b seems too regular to have been engraved freehand.

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<sup>2465</sup> Another breccia seal engraved in the same way is CMS XII no. 94 (material according to Younger 1987, 13).