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 Psycho 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). The majority of examples are cut in steatite. Occasionally, other soft stones/minerals, such as sepiolite, and medium-hard stones are used. 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 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.
Fig. 18 Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.
STYLE GROUPS

(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).

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 branches 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). 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 blade or are composed with each other in repetition compounds such as Cross patterns and Rows (fig. 18 j, v). In this latter case, they are often combined on the seal face with other devices which are cut freehand (fig. 18 v). 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. On these seals, lines are very rarely created by filing.

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). 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.
STYLE GROUPS

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.
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.
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 – Vandenabeele 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.
being cut with tools operated in the spindle. Moreover, the motifs are characterised by a tendency for elaboration which places them close to hard stone hieroglyphic seals. 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). 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. Similar traits are also met on some steatite seals of other forms. Such soft and medium-hard stone seals combine elements of soft and hard stone engraving and are situated on the

---

69 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.
cusp 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
element 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.
STYLE GROUPS

The prisms from the Malia Workshop

The prisms found at the Workshop are dated to MM IIB. With the exception of two examples cut in sepiolite or another soft mineral/stone, 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.

Descriptive, ‘pictographic’, and ornamental images as well as hieroglyphic inscriptions are met. 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. 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. 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.

160, 171, 185, and 205 are seen as demonstrating influences from Prepalatial seals which come from the Mesara tholoi, which in the present study is excluded from the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms, could indeed be partially compared to some Prepalatial seals. 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. 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 (??)
STYLE GROUPS

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. 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. However, as opposed to 205, 104 is made of chlorite and not of steatite. 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
deep grooves are foreign to the Workshop.\footnote{For examples of prisms with round seal faces from the workshop, see 151 and 204; for examples with deep grooves, see 174 and 177.} 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.\footnote{See footnote 400.} 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.\footnote{See p. 77 (the Hasty Cut Style).} Moreover, the device 171 a finds good parallels not only on earlier seals as Thomas seems to suggest\footnote{Thomas 1989, 279–284.} but also on Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms.\footnote{Thomas 1989, 279.} 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.\footnote{Compare for example 183. See also p. 77 (the Hasty Cut Style).} For these reasons, earlier influences on these pieces can be ruled out.

Among the rest of the prisms, Thomas makes out three ‘styles’.\footnote{406 For examples of prisms with round seal faces from the workshop, see 151 and 204; for examples with deep grooves, see 174 and 177.} 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.\footnote{Thomas 1989, 279–284.} 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 style.
STYLE GROUPS

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. At the same time, he poses the question whether this could also suggest that more than one hand could have worked on one piece. 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. 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. In the opinion of the present author, the thinner and shallower line is an indication that the engraving is unfinished. 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. 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.

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.
that with a few exceptions, 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.

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 Workshop would not allow the simultaneous work there of more than one craftsperson. 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). 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. 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. 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. The various components of the intaglio are well bonded such that firm and compact devices are created.

---

415 For these pieces, see the discussion above.
416 For this subject, see also Poursat 1981, 160.
417 3×3 m.
418 Poursat 1996, 110.
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.
The intaglio floors are often totally flat but more anomalous ones are also met. 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. Often they penetrate the stone vertically and have flat bases or, more rarely, they are shallower and have convex profiles. Both cutting out and drilling of a ‘cup sinking’ can be met on a single surface. For that reason, the choice of the method cannot be taken as indicative of the operation of one hand.

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

---

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.
STYLE GROUPS

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). 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. 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. 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). The cuts are thin, shallow, and very rickety whereas ‘blanks’ are not met. ‘Cup sinkings’ created by drilling are attested.

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

---


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 Desenne 1957, 127.

STYLE GROUPS

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.
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
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.
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 intaglio...
as 115 a. 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 Lannnon’ (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. 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).

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 craftsperson 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. 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 e, 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.
**STYLE GROUPS**

![Figure 25: Prisms from places in Malia outside the Workshop which were probably not manufactured there.](image)

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). 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. ‘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, 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. Often,

---

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 Pommeau, the Cross Pommeau, the Whirls, and the Dogs/lions) suggest that these prisms belong to the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group.
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, ‘Π-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 intaglions 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. 319 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. ‘Π-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:
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 Workshop 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). 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). 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.
STYLE GROUPS

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 craftsperson 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). The pieces are brought together on the basis of the depiction from the Workshop, 424, 433, and 531 are assembled in the Cluster of the Full-Figured Bovine (fig. 26). 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.
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 intaglio is formed as ‘blanks’ with angular or rounded U-profiles. 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). The iconographic but also stylistic similarity of the quadrupeds on these seals as well as the similarities in the execution of the intaglio 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 intaglio which often lack deeper outline walls, precision in the execution, and recurring iconographic themes (fig. 27). 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). 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

---

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 intaglio of 393 c and 497 c to the intaglio 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

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 e* 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.

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

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. ‘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. 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. 452 a and 573 a 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

are not stylistically and iconographically 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). 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. 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). The peculiar iconography of some pieces, which is on some occasions not paralleled outside the group, 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' a 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.
STYLE GROUPS

472 b (VI 66 b)

a.

491 c (VI 67 c)

b.

Fig. 33 Cluster of the Plain Quadruped.

33 c (XIII 7D c)

a.

39 a (VII 207 a)

b.

124 c (ILI 2236 c)

c.

33 b (XIII 7D b)

d.

Fig. 34 Cluster of the Bulky Quadruped.

others cannot be disputed does not support this suggestion. 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.

The Cluster of the Hasty Slanting Cut is assembled from pieces whose intaglios often have V-profiles created by hasty slanting cuts (fig. 32). 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). 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).

Fig. 35 Clusters of the Plain Quadruped.

Fig. 36 Clusters of the Bulky Quadruped.

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
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. 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. 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.

---

Footnotes:
486 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').
487 For this cluster, see p. 82.
488 of Malia'), 118 ('Krasi'), 263 ('Lasithi'), 324 ('Mesara').
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. 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. 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. The pieces are iconographically and stylistically so close that their engraving by one hand is considered very possible.

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. 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. 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). 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. Each seal face bears one or at the most two devices. The intaglios are deep and configured as ‘blanks’ with flat floors whereas

---

489 ‘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 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.
493 For the relation of this cluster to the Cluster of the Muscular Men, see p. 94.
494 349 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

‘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.
is triangular (fig. 38 c). 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). The fact that the two tendencies are met on the two seal faces of one prism 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.

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. 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.

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'.](image)

![Fig. 41 Cluster of the Progressive Tendencies.](image)

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. 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. 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. 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.
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. 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). 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.

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. 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. 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). 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.
STYLE GROUPS

493 a (VI 79 a)  
493 c (VI 79 c)  
549 a (IX 19 a)  
549 b (IX 19 b)  

Fig. 42  Cluster of the Triangular Scorpion.

113 a (II,2 306 a)  
286 b (III 151 b)  
560 b (not to scale)  
560 a (not to scale)  

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.
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. The animal echelons 286 b and 560 c (?) 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). The pose is commoner on bone/hippo ivory seals from the Mesara, although there it is connected with lions and not ruminants. The ‘cup sinkings’ in which the arms of two figures terminate find parallels with those of the figures on the reel Chatzi Vallianou 1987, pl. 192 e from Sopata Kouse 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 Agrimi 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’, a piece rejected by Kenna as a forgery, rehabilitated by Gill, and rejected once more by Hughes Brock (fig. 43 d).

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). 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.
519 286 c, 560 a.
520 For this seal, see pp. 137–138.
521 Evans 1921, 196 footnote 4.
522 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
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

\(^{526}\) 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.
abrasive action after being cut with tools operated on the spindle.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 \textsuperscript{75} whose devices on two sides could represent hieroglyphic signs or attempts to imitate hieroglyphs (fig. 45 a).\textsuperscript{534} Another piece is \textsuperscript{422} whose peculiar execution of the hieroglyphic signs on \textsuperscript{422 a} and \textsuperscript{422 b} raises doubts regarding its authenticity.\textsuperscript{535} Peculiar is the iconography and execution of the Quatrefoil \textsuperscript{461 c}, the Man in profile and the Agrimi \textsuperscript{602 a} and \textsuperscript{602 b} respectively, the Head of an agrimi and the “Bulb branch” \textsuperscript{605 b} and \textsuperscript{605 c} respectively, and the overall synthesis on \textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{536} Finally, neither the iconography nor the style of any of the seal faces of \textsuperscript{439}, \textsuperscript{593}, \textsuperscript{A.11}, and \textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{537}

\textsuperscript{532} For this subject, see pp. 37, also footnotes 189–191.
\textsuperscript{533} For this subject, see pp. 37, 68–70.
\textsuperscript{534} For the possibility of reading some devices as imitations of hieroglyphs, see pp. 355.
\textsuperscript{535} The execution of the intaglios on this piece could suggest that the stone is harder than steatite.
\textsuperscript{536} Compare for example the Head of a ‘ram’ \textsuperscript{605 a} to that on \textsuperscript{19 c} and perhaps \textsuperscript{312 b}; the composition \textsuperscript{602 c} to those on \textsuperscript{265 c} and \textsuperscript{534 a}; the ‘Spider’ a \textsuperscript{461 b} to those on \textsuperscript{414 a} and \textsuperscript{580 b}; and the Dog/lion \textsuperscript{A.16 a} to the same device on CMS II,2 no. 161.
\textsuperscript{537} E.g. the bad preservation of the image \textsuperscript{593 c}. Also the unclear images \textsuperscript{439 b}, \textsuperscript{A.13 b}, \textsuperscript{13 c}, \textsuperscript{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.
STYLE GROUPS

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
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 a and 551 c. The execution of the devices is different in that the intaglias 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). 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. In two cases, none of these motifs appears; instead, the animal stands alone or is surrounded by a *Border*. 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.

---

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
STYLE GROUPS

iconography on the other sides of many of these pieces is comparable to that of prisms which come from the Malia Workshop.\footnote{Compare for example 110 c to 169 e; 301 b to 186 e; 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.}

Noteworthy is the combination of the hieroglyphic inscription CHIC signs 044 – 049, a Pig/boar, and/or a Swastika flanked by Hatched Ds.\footnote{Compare for example 110 c to 169 e; 301 b to 186 e; 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.}

Noteworthy is the combination of the hieroglyphic inscription CHIC signs 044 – 049\footnote{“Trowel” and ‘Arrow’ b.} 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).\footnote{E.g. 99, 108, 158, 561. These pieces are not stylistically dissimilar.}
STYLE GROUPS

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).\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 $\Delta$-, T-, or II- perforation (fig. 52 a–c).\textsuperscript{547} The majority of conoids have decorated backs, mostly torsionally fluted but sometimes also ladder-incised, whereas examples with plain backsides are also met.\textsuperscript{548} Four-sided prisms, rectangular plates, and signets are also popular (fig. 52 d–i).\textsuperscript{549} Amongst the latter, Petschafte, i.e. signets with ‘distinctly articulated

\textsuperscript{545} 166, 187, 227, 261, 273, 355, 366, 490, 502, 579, 581.

\textsuperscript{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.

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

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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,
Fig. 52  Other Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals.
STYLE GROUPS

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), 377 (Palaiakastro, 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
STYLE GROUPS

Planoconvex seals, gables with three engraved sides, and foliate backs are rarer (fig. 52 n,o). 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. Finally, two reels seem somewhat close to the prisms of the group, but also show elements which do not allow them to be definitely classified with the former.

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 on 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* (?)).

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.

CMS III no. 26; CMS VI no. 151 (?); CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 40 (Agios Charalampous, 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).

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
STYLE GROUPS

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 – Vandenabeele 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 diamicton 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 – Vandenabeele 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 – Vandenabeele 1980, 189).

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

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.

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. 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. 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.

**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). 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
with the group, four can be connected to it with confidence.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{564}

Out of three sealings which seem close to the group from Kato Zakros, one can be associated with it with certainty.\textsuperscript{565} Three further possible cases come from Knossos, one from Petras, and another from Palaikastro.\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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 e), 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 \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{564} CMS II,6 no. 214.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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
from Phaistos and two from Monastiraki show iconographic elements characteristic of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Seals. 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.

The fine execution of the 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 c; 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.

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).

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,
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 Crete 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, Elounta, and the town of Siteia are the find spots.

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.
STYLE GROUPS

added. Again, 80% of the pieces with a provenance 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, 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. 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.

The disproportionally 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. 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. 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. The majority of prisms come from the MM IIB destruction layer of Quartier Mu. Finally, one piece comes from a possible LM I, another from a LM I, a third from a LM IB, and a forth from a LM IIIA2/B context.

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. 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.
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.
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 IIIB 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 IIIB 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 IIIB. 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.
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).
seals of Sbonias’s Lions/Spiral Group (*fig. 56 b*). While similar compositions of animals are not unknown from Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Prisms, 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’. In contrast to that, the manes of the animals are created by deep thick vertical cuts as is common on MM II steatite seals. The devices and do not find particularly good parallels among any of the two above discussed groups of seals. However, the para-atactic composition on and the reflection symmetrical image on 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. 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. 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*).
STYLE GROUPS

is only met once in connection with seals of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group is very often met on MM I seals from the Mesara (fig. 56 c). 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 IB and only rarely appear in the iconography of the Malia/Eastern Crete Steatite Group. 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. 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.

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. The human figure 399 b does not find good parallels on EM and MM iconography, 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. 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. 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.

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.
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 Sakellaraki 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).
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 Sakellaraki 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.
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. However, the intaglio is rounder and the animal has an expressly more voluminous body than most of the motifs on these prisms. Panagiotopoulos adjuncts the piece to a group of hippo ivory stamp cylinders which show lions with rounded intaglios and characteristically voluminous bodies. 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 there 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. 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.

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. The material, iconography, and style of 399 would point to either Mesara or Archanes as its place of origin. 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.
STYLE GROUPS

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 Sakellarakis 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).
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.
620 102.
621 E.g. 101 b, 103 c, 341 a.
622 E.g. 102 b, 357 c.
The occupation of the seal face by a single device or an ornamental image is preferred. 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). 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. ‘Pictographic’ images are only represented by one example whereas hieroglyphic inscriptions are not met. Two descriptive images have a narrative character (fig. 58 k).

---

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.
STYLE GROUPS

![Images of various stylistic considerations](image)

**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.
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.\textsuperscript{631} To a large extent, the iconography and style of this group are similar to those of the Foliage/Bone Group\textsuperscript{632} 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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).\textsuperscript{635}

\textsuperscript{631} For the group, see Sbonias 1995, 107–113.
\textsuperscript{632} Especially as regards the wide use of foliage.
\textsuperscript{633} Sbonias 1995, 105.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{635} CMS II,1 nos. 374 a, 374 b; CMS IV nos. 24D a, 24D b.
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. 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. 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. 374 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’ Group underline once more the fact that the boundaries between this and the Foliage/Bone Group are by no means clear cut.

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. 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. The cluster constitutes part of Yule’s Platanos Goat Complex.

637 Compare also the pose of the quadruped 101 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 and CMS IV no. 24D to CMS II,1 no. 391 m. Compare also the pose of the Agrimi 101 to that of the quadrupeds CMS II,1 nos. 64 c, 64 d.
641 E.g. 104 c, 112 c.
642 See especially 104, 217.
643 For the complex, see Yule 1980 a, 211.
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**.
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

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, presumably mainly on account of the S-spiral with leaves 102 c which is a composition common on this group but also because of the Quatrefoil 102 a, a device also met on seals of the group. 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. These seal forms are not met in connection with seals of the Foliage/Bone Group. 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. 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. 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. 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 Foliate/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
STYLE GROUPS

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,


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, Epidaurus, 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 [?])?
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.
a reel, and perhaps a hemispheroid and three buttons (fig. 67). 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.
STYLE GROUPS

Comparable to a certain extent to 216 of 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 do 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 (‘Kaloi 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/chlorite 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
STYLE GROUPS

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. 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. 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. 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, 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). 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.

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).

Sealings impressed by seals which belong or are related to the Mesara Chlorite Group
Phaistos (fig. 69 c–f, h). *C-spiral roof compounds*, combinations of *S-spirals* or *Paisleys* with leaves\(^679\) 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*.


\(^681\) 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.
STYLE GROUPS

_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, Epidaurus). 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).
and that none of the four pieces which come from other sites\(^{689}\) 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.
STYLE GROUPS

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 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
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 II-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 ‘Kalo Limenes’ and the chlorite

---

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.
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 Dawkings 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.
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 *Agrimia* 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.
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. 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).  

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
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. 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. 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, 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).
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. 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. 52 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.

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

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

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, 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. 242 (?) (‘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.
STYLE GROUPS

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.\textsuperscript{721} To the broader stylistic environment of these pieces can be added three further
conoids, two discs, two stamp cylinders, and a pyramidoid.\textsuperscript{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).\textsuperscript{723} In its publication, the piece is described as an amulet seal comparable to seals

\textsuperscript{721} Conoid: CMS II,1 no. 490; perhaps also CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 427 (Rafina, road between the buildings \textGamma\ 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’).

\textsuperscript{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’).

\textsuperscript{723} Max Bernheimer 2007, 33 no. EG-1.
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.
which come from the Greek islands and especially Rhodes during the first half of the 7th century.\textsuperscript{724} While the nature of the depicted motifs does not rule out the possibility that such similarities could be accidental,\textsuperscript{725} the partly shared compositions between the Minoan seals and the seal in question would suggest that the latter, if indeed archaic,\textsuperscript{726} copies Minoan prototypes.\textsuperscript{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).\textsuperscript{728} Since devices

\textsuperscript{724} Max Bernheimer 2007, 33. For the amulet seals, see Boardman 1963, 136–144.
\textsuperscript{725} Linear devices and circles are simple motifs which can be easily devised independently and need not always suggest contact between two traditions.
\textsuperscript{726} On iconographic criteria, the possibility that the piece is Minoan cannot be ruled out. However, its shape, a pyramidal rectangular plate with loop, is unprecedented among Minoan seals.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{728} Garstang 1989, 33–34; Evans 1909, 129 fig. 66. Compare especially the Unidentifiable motif LIII 62 c with the
STYLE GROUPS

created by cable-like lines and circles are common in Egyptian seals.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 hieroglyphs\textsuperscript{732} 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{729} E.g. also Flinders Petrie 1925, pl. V no. 344.
\textsuperscript{730} Evans 1909, 115–116. The group is handled in Evans 1909, 115–118.
\textsuperscript{731} 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’).
\textsuperscript{732} 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.
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). 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). The composition of 107 and those of the above mentioned seals find some parallels among the Phaistos sealings (fig. 86).

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.

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.

CENTRAL CRETE ORNAMENTAL PRISMS

2.9 % of the existing prisms belong to this group (fig. 87). 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.

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

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 Koumaza which was used in EM II–MM II (?).
740 For this subject, see pp. 136–137.
742 For this subject, see p. 35.
that of the seal body. 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. 21a, 121a. 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.
STYLE GROUPS

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

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 that 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 CRETEORNAMENTAL 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.
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 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 I); 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 no. 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 (‘Mianou’); 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); Lepmesi 1987, 287 fig. 10 (schist [?]); Symi Viannou, Sanctuary of Hermes and Afrodite). CMS XII no. 69 is close to the cluster but its composition is different from 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 9); 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 (? (‘Lasiti’); 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.


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 no. 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-
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). 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).

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

CMS VI no. 99, cut in ‘unnaturally white’ agate\textsuperscript{761} 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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).\textsuperscript{765} The White Prisms Cluster is represented by fewer sealings impressed by ellipsoidal, round, and rectangular seal faces (fig. 90 d–f).\textsuperscript{766}

\textsuperscript{761} CMS VI. The piece comes from ‘Papoura’.
\textsuperscript{762} Compare for example CMS VI no. 99 a to \textsuperscript{395}c; CMS VI no. 99 c to \textsuperscript{258}c, A.5 a.
\textsuperscript{763} For this subject, see pp. 37, 42–43, 109, also footnote 552.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{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.
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).\footnote{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 CMS II,8 no. 107. Gournia: CMS II,6 no. 156. Malia: CMS II,6 no. 207 (?).}

**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,
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-circles769 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 Tylisos 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 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.
According to the excavator, one prism comes from the upper layers of an EM III/MM IA pottery context.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{777}

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

\textsuperscript{776} 252.

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

\textsuperscript{778} CMS II,1 no. 164.
I context and a third from a building used in MM IA. 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. 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. 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 whose affiliation with the White Prisms Cluster would not justify such an early date. 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, Petschaffe 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.

781 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.
782 This is because Dimopoulou 2000, 36 no. 28 of this cluster cannot be dated earlier than MM II. For this subject, see also pp. 45–46.
783 For the impact of these seal groupings on the understanding of MM Crete, see the section ‘Conclusions’, pp. 371–375.