

A LARGE STYLISTIC GROUP OF THE LATE XVth CENTURY

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There is a large group of similar bulls on seals (see Appendix) that most scholars would date toward the middle of the XVth century, yet this group seems to cause us some confusion about the precise way one seal within the group relates stylistically to another¹. In my own case, I have found that when I 'take the bull by the horns', as it were, I can, on one day, create one set of sub-groups quite different from the set I create the next day when I 'take the bull by the tail'.

I should like to take a close look at the most important pieces of this large interconnected group of XVth century bulls in order better to understand exactly what causes my confusion and how I might determine a methodological viewpoint that will resolve that confusion, at least enough for me so that others can profitably study the problem further and refine it. The complete groups with close and near pieces are listed in an appendix; they and the other XVth century groups are also published in *Kadmos* 23, 1984, 57-58 and 65-66.

We start with the lentoid CMS II 3 No. 62 (*Fig. 1*) from Ayios Ioannes T. III (LM IIB-III context). It is a large (D. 2.7×2.9 cm.) lentoid of red-brown agate called sard in CMS. Two bulls recline left on a double groundline. A fuzzy frond stands both in front of and in back of the bulls; the one in back leans over the back of the far bull.

There is a mixture here of rich modelling and of an unabashed and uncrased use of the tool, a mixture which is common among the seals of the mid and late XVth century. The rich modelling



Fig. 1 CMS II 3 No. 62 from Ayios Ioannes T. 3.

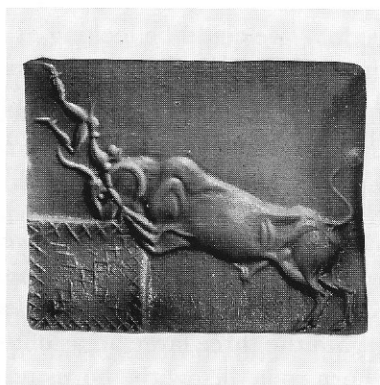


Fig. 2 Oxford No. AM 1938. 964 (CS 202) from Priene.

¹ I wish to thank Dr Ingo Pini and the Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel for supplying the illustrations. All descriptions follow the impression.

is carried over from the earlier, more massive bulls of the early XVth century, as we shall see. We can observe this modelling readily in the three swollen areas that define the neck, belly, and haunch; though each of these three areas appears tight and controlled, there are, however, internal zones of subsidiary modelling: the beveled edges of the neck, the recessed lower part of the belly, and the domed, almost pyramidal shape of the center of the haunch. The two transitional zones also reveal rich modelling: the shoulder began as a curved engraved line before the area behind it was enlarged into a deep valley with subsidiary hollows; and the hip area, now a solid intaglio triangle began, however, as an outline, much as one sees, for instance, in such earlier seals as the Priene muscular bull (AM 1938. 964 = CS 202; *Fig. 2*) and on the Vapheio Cups.

The uncerased use of the tool is also clearly noticeable. Simple lines striate the crown of the far bull's head and the back of his neck and they prick the fronds. Fairly clean, thicker lines are used for the near bull's septum, chest profile line, and tail, and for the frond stalks and groundlines. A dot joins the two curves of the near bull's horns, articulates his nose and testicle (unless that is his tail tip), two dots with blurred outlines enlarge his dewlap, and clusters of dots form the hooves and frond foliage.

We seem caught between two apparently conflicting desires. The artist has imitated the natural power of the bull through the use of rich modelling and has concentrated this rich modelling in the central and larger area of the engraved sealface; on the other hand, the artist has also surrounded this large area of rich modelling with a scattering of conventional and impressionistic tool marks that do not invite much more than our cursory glance, and therefore force the viewer back to the bull's body.

Throughout this composition there are, however, areas where the two intentions seem fused, or rather confused; we may note, for instance, the gentle curves in the legs and the dainty form of the hooves that jar with the jerky lines and blobby dots that form them. Even more noticeable is the treatment of the eye, that part of the animal where the Late Bronze Age glyptic artist was, I think, the most concerned to focus his artistic intention. Here, the eye is rendered by a simple dot that floats in a tiny flat field set below the surface of the bull's face (on the stone this field floats above the surface of the bull's face); a short ridge, in the shape of an irregular oval, encircles this dot – we could be looking at the pimple of a miniature crater formed by a minuscule meteorite. The effect is not pleasing: here, the bull seems cadaverous, as if we are looking at an eye still attached to a skull, and through the oblique line of the bull's body his eye is counterbalanced by his testicle, an unhappy symmetry. As a final note, we also compare the nervous engraving of the eye with the similarly jerky lines of the legs and the angular forms of the shoulder and haunch.

Using this seal as a starting point we can surround it with others like it to form a larger group. We now look (*Fig. 3*) at a single reclining bull on a seal in the New York Metropolitan Museum, CMS XII No. 248, a slightly smaller lentoid, though of the same type of red-brown agate. Here, we see again the three large areas of the body richly modelled, the use of a simple dot not only for the horn root (below the horns now, instead of joining together the two parts of its lunate curve), but also for the fleshy dewlap, the eye, and the hooves. The same nervousness is also apparent here, not only in the jerky treatment of lines and the irregular and angular forms, but also in the twiggy tree in back and above, in the sketchy multiple groundline below, and in that same morbid eye.

There are of course differences in the treatment of some anatomical details. Most obvious is



Fig. 3 CMS XII No. 248.

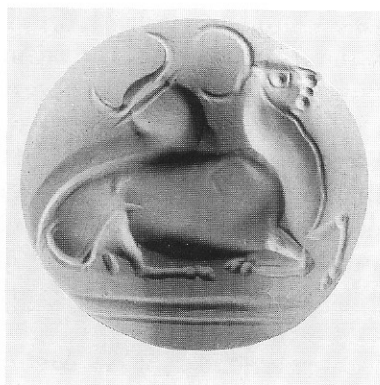


Fig. 4 CMS V No. 433 from Nichoria.

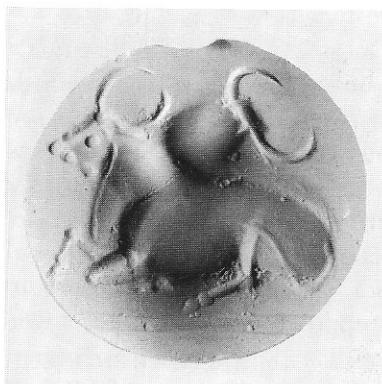


Fig. 5 CMS VII No. 127.

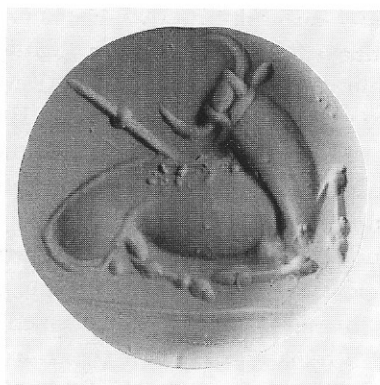


Fig. 6 CMS XII No. 235.

the harsh, jerky, linear curve of the shoulder; in addition, two dots marking the blunt end of the muzzle align with the dot at the nose tip to form a straight line of three dots – such a configuration is found on a later (ca. 1300–1270/60 B.C.) Pictorial krater² from Kition² by the Bull-Leap Painter. Another major difference is the upward continuation of the chest's profile line, curving through the neck to frame the back part of the face. On the other hand, we miss the added modelling of the transition areas of shoulder and hip and even of the hooves, which here, in comparison, seem perfunctory in their technical simplicity.

Even more simplified is the lentoid CMS V No. 433 (*Fig. 4*) from the Nichoria Tholos (LH III A₂–B context). Of similar material and as large as the Ayios Ioannes seal, it presents the same pose with two bulls reclining, though now to the right, over two groundlines; it lacks, however, any kind of foliage filler. Again, we notice the same grandness of scale and the same undulating surfaces in the three major areas of the near bull's body, and the nervous engraving of the lines, especially at the shoulder. Like the NY Metropolitan seal, the Nichoria gem is simpler

² E. Vermeule and V. Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial Vase-Painting* pot V. 48.

than the Ayios Ioannes seal; it lacks the striations on the rear bull, the added modelling around the legs and hooves and around the initial lines that form the transition areas of shoulder and hip (though the testicle seems to have received an added broadening of its initial dot), and, again as with the NY Metropolitan seal, we see the continuation of the chest profile line to frame the back of the near bull's face. As on the Ayios Ioannes piece, we have the controlled long lines of the double groundline; on the other hand, the dot-eye now sits surrounded by a linear trapezoid.

We look now at a seal in the British Museum, CMS VII No. 127 (*Fig. 5*), again of similar size and material and with the same pose of two bulls reclining left over two controlled groundlines; we note again the same undulating surfaces of the major areas and the nervous lines; the hip and the linear shoulder are also more broadly modelled, though perhaps not as much as those on the Ayios Ioannes seal; like the NY Metropolitan seal the eye is of the pimple-crater type and the joint between two curves of the near bull's horns is effected by a dot; like both the NY Metropolitan and the Nichoria seals, the chest profile line continues upward to frame the back of the near bull's face. For the first time, however, we see the horny ridge on the crown of the far bull's head flanked by two short lines, and the near bull without his testicle.

Another seal in the NY Metropolitan Museum, CMS XII No. 235 (*Fig. 6*), presents a single bull reclining right, like the first NY Metropolitan piece, but here it averts its head as if it were only the rear bull of the other seals. Here we see again the two lines that flank the horny crown of his head, as on the BM piece. In most respects, this bull resembles the others in this group except that it displays a slightly smoother and tighter modelling of the main surfaces and more precisely rendered hooves. Perhaps in the same neat spirit we note the full profile line on the back and haunch that continues to form the tail, as it does on the BM lentoid; there is also just the single, simple groundline and the precisely straight *pica*. These neater touches are probably due to the seal's much smaller size, D. 2.1–2.2 cm. (as opposed to an otherwise average D. 2.8 cm.).

Another large lentoid, also of brownish agate, comes from Orchomenos, CMS V No. 688 (*Fig. 7*); its face is badly chipped. The bull again seems neat with cleanly positioned dots where we have come to expect them (even the eye sits on the otherwise uncluttered surface of the face without any sunken field or surrounding ridge, somewhat like the eye on the BM lentoid); in spite of the tighter and broader modelling, however, we can detect that familiar nervousness betrayed in the jerky lines of the horns and the angular forms that make up the shoulder and near foreleg. The bull is attacked by a lion which rears up from behind and supports itself on the bull's back. Notice how neatly the lion's hindquarters (however disproportionately slender and short they may be) totally obscure the bull's hindquarters; were these hindquarters originally meant to have been the bull's and is it possible that there was some confusion in the final planning of the design?

For the first time we now can examine our group's lions: the head is large and rectangular; the eye is formed by a centrally located dot that sits raised on the surface of the face like a pimple; from the back of the head a simple S-shaped line first separates the head from the mane, outlines the jaw, and then pulls away from the muzzle as if to indicate an open and drooping lower lip; the neck is joined to the shoulder area by a continuous covering of short strokes depicting a large mane that bristles with neatly positioned dashes beyond the profile; one of these dashes, just above where the neck meets the head, is slightly longer than the rest – perhaps it is a perky ear; clusters of dots form paws and the end of the muzzle; another single dot sits in the middle of the

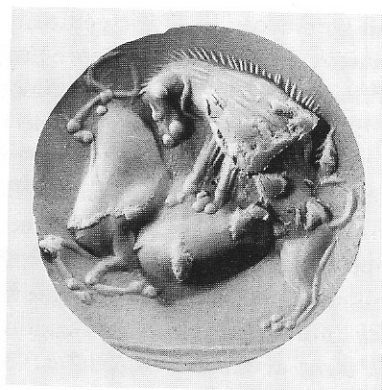


Fig. 7 CMS V No. 688 from Orchomenos.



Fig. 8 CMS II 3 No. 64b from Ayios Ioannes T. 3.



Fig. 9 CMS II 3 No. 64a from Ayios Ioannes T. 3.

septum; a profile line doubles the haunch and hindleg; and jerky short lines create the curved tail.

We can see the same lion (*Fig. 8*) on face b) of a sardonyx prism CMS II 3 No. 64, also from Ayios Ioannes T. III (LM IIB–IIIA context); its other face, side a) (*Fig. 9*), carries another of our group's bulls. Here again, though, we perhaps should attribute to the small diameter of the prism's faces (D. 1.9–2.0 cm.) the tidier appearance of the animals and the more noticeable use of tool marks. The bull may seem at first glance slightly odd, but the same undulating surfaces, angular forms, nervous lines are all present; the dot-eye floats on a slightly recessed field as it does on CMS XII No. 248 (*Fig. 3*), the first NY Metropolitan piece; the hooves are dotted but slightly blurred with additional modelling, as on the first Ayios Ioannes gem; the branch in back and above the bull resembles some hybrid between that on the other Ayios Ioannes seal (*Fig. 1*) and the one on CMS XII No. 248 – slightly rounded clumps of foliage with sketched twigs on the surface.

The lion on side b) (*Fig. 8*), however, is the Orchomenos lion now sitting, averting its notice from the irritating short *picas* in its chest in order to regard the fatal one in its shoulder. The same clusters of dots form the paws and end of the muzzle; single dots top the ulna, end the radius and

tail, and similarly create the centrally located eye; and the mane bristles identically. The ear here, however, perks forward more prominently.

There is another group, albeit a loose one, of similar red-brown agate/sardonyx lentoids depicting bulls stylistically very close to the Ayios Ioannes Group. We may start with another lentoid in the NY Metropolitan Museum, CMS XII No. 249 (*Fig. 10*), the group's smallest in diameter (D. 2.1–2.2 cm.). Here a bull reclines left on a masonry dado; a rope that is tied to the base of his horns tethers him to a tree in back leaning above him. At first glance, this tethered bull appears, in its monumentality to be closely related to the Ayios Ioannes bulls (*Fig. 1*): the three major areas, chest, belly, and haunch, are richly modelled; the two transitional areas, shoulder and hip, are nervously defined; a profile line outlines the chest; the end of the muzzle is given three articulations; the testicle is rendered by a dot; and the tree belongs to the same species as that on the Ayios Ioannes gem itself, though here its twigs are more precisely placed.

There are, however, noticeable differences in our new NY piece: both horns are shown in profile and given elegant S-curves; the eye is a lengthened dot enclosed in an ellipse with angular ends (we will call it an almond-eye, for convenience); the three articulations at the end of the



Fig. 10 CMS XII No. 249.

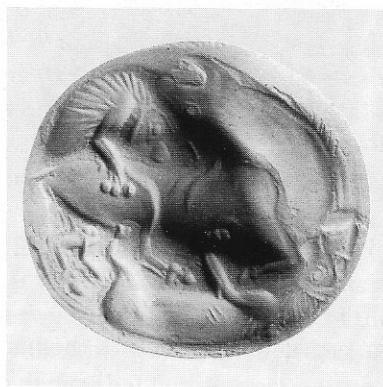


Fig. 11 CMS XII No. 251.

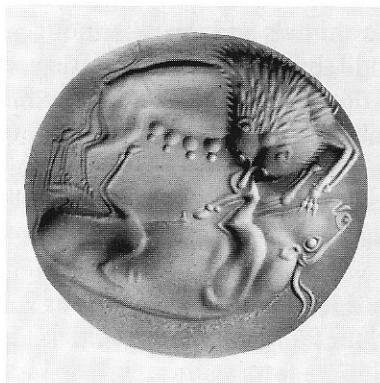


Fig. 12 CMS XIII No. 26.

muzzle consists of an irregular outlined oval space for the nose, a horizontal dash for a lolling tongue, and a blobby dot for the chin; profile lines articulate the neck, chest, belly, and haunch; and the upper forelegs are slightly thickened, just enough to allow for a slight division into vertical ridges imitating the biceps and triceps femoris. The area about the hindlegs is crowded with incidental detail; shown are both hindlegs, the tail, testicle, and pizzle (the bull's penis sheath). Even the use of dots is more precise; those that articulate the tethered bull's knees, for instance, are small and unobtrusive.

In other words, in comparison with the Ayios Ioannes bulls, our tethered bull seems more naturalistic and its rendering does not depend as much on the unerased marks of the drill.

We may group a few seals loosely around the tethered bull in much the same way as we grouped seals around the Ayios Ioannes bulls. Perhaps the closest are CMS XII No. 251 (*Fig. 11*), again in New York, and CMS XIII No. 26 (*Fig. 12*), now in Boston; both lentoids are much larger than our group's namepiece (D's. 2.7–2.9 and 3.0–3.3 cm., respectively) but are of the familiar red-brown agate/sardonyx we have seen before. The larger size permits on both a more complicated composition; on the NY Metropolitan piece, two lions attack the bull, while



Fig. 13 CMS I No. 272 a from Rutsi.



Fig. 14 CMS II 3 No. 60 from Ayios Ioannes T. 4.

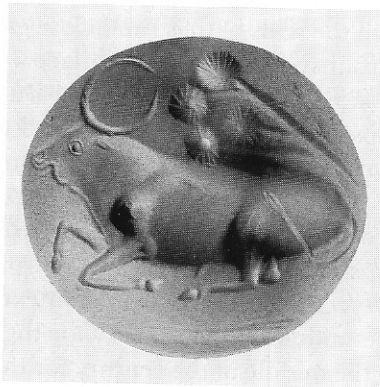


Fig. 15 CMS XII No. 289.

on the Boston seal a single lioness attacks. The same general bull type can be recognized on both gems: the massive body, richly modelled, and outlined by profile lines along much of the silhouette, the slightly thickened upper foreleg, the delicate S-curves of the horns, the restrained use of dots, and of course the prominent almond-eye.

The NY Metropolitan lentoid has suffered erosion along its softer veins near the periphery and consequently the bull's neck and hindlegs now appear scratched. The smaller field of this piece also should have called for a less ambitious composition; the lions are proportionally too small, and they are squeezed between the bull and the periphery of the field. Stylistically, the lions are close to lions in the Cretan Popular Group (abbreviated, the CP Group); they have conventionally striated manes and a characteristic line that separates the head from the mane and continues on to form the lower jaw. There are a few differences here, though: that line between head and mane does not continue on to form the lower jaw; and the lions have large and prominent almond-eyes instead of the dot-eye or encircled dot-eye common to the CP lions (e.g., CMS I No. 272a, *Fig. 13*).

The field of the Boston piece is spacious, over 3.0 cm in diameter, and it naturally, on the other hand, called forth a large and pleasing composition; the monumentally grand lioness is endowed with an unnatural but carefully rendered mane, teddybear ears, a spatula-shaped muzzle, and a large dot in the center of the back of her head to represent the horny occipital knob where the skullcap thickens over the top of the spinal column, a distinctive trait of a completely different and much more schematic group of lions attacking pendant bulls (e.g., CMS II 3 No. 60, *Fig. 14*).

Another NY Metropolitan piece, CMS XII No. 289 (*Fig. 15*), also lies close to the tethered bull. The carefully controlled, nearly circular curve of the horns and the precisely rendered starfronds both appear as fastidiously produced as do the S-shaped horns of the tethered bull and the neat tree to which it is roped; the bull's flat face with its prominent almond-eye and hollow nose is the same; and the elegant placement of the bull slightly raised above its groundlines shows the same concern for the spatial relationship between figure and field.

We have looked now at two stylistically close groups, the Bulls from Ayios Ioannes T. 3 (e.g., CMS II 3 No. 62, *Fig. 1*) with the lunate horns, thin legs, and dotted eyes and extremities, and the more naturalistic Group of the Tethered Bull (e.g., CMS XII No. 249, *Fig. 10*) with the S-curved doublet of horns, sturdier legs, and elliptical (almond-) eyes. By following the Appendix in which the seals of these and close groups are listed, we might be able to determine the date of these groups and their stylistic place within the overall development of Late Bronze Age glyptic.

Two seals close to the Tethered Bull Group come from the chamber of the Vapheio Tholos (perhaps LH II context) and a third comes from the Rutsi Tholos (LH IIA[-IIIA₁] context). The two amygdaloids in the close group of the Wounded Bulls come from the LH IIA Gouvalari tholoi. And in the Ayios Ioannes T. 3 Group two seals come from Ayios Ioannes T. 3 (LM IIB-IIIA context), while of the close seals one comes from the chamber of the Vapheio Tholos (perhaps LH II context), another from Rutsi Tholos 2 (LH IIA[-IIIA₁] context), and a third from Mycenae T. 515 (LH IIB context). The earliest context dates, then, suggest a date just before the middle of the century for the Tethered Group and that date or perhaps slightly later, nearer the middle of the century for the Ayios Ioannes T. 3 Group.

For the home of the general style, as illustrated by these groups, we turn to the findspots of their members. Of seals in the Tethered Bull Group, seven come from the Mainland (Vapheio,



Fig. 16 CMS V No. 222 from the Apollo Maleatas Sanctuary.



Fig. 17 CMS XII No. 272.

Rutsi, Nichoria, and Gouvalari tholoi) while only two may come from Crete. Of the seals in the Group of the Bulls from Ayios Ioannes T. 3, two come from the Knossos area, another comes from east Crete, while CMS XII No. 235, once in the Seager Collection, may also have come from Crete; two others come from the Nichoria Tholos and from Orchomenos on the Mainland. Of the seals close or near to the Ayios Ioannes Group only one comes from Crete, but eight come from the Mainland (Mycenae, Rutsi, Vapheio, Nichoria, Pylos, and Thebes?).

The findspots suggest a Mainland bias for these groups, and one that even seems aristocratic, considering that the seals solidly within the groups come from the Mainland tholoi at Vapheio, Rutsi, and Nichoria, from outside the Mycenaean palace at Orchomenos, and from a Warrior Tomb at Ayios Ioannes near Knossos. Even some of the close seals come also from Mainland tholoi, though others also come from the humbler chamber tombs. The findspots, therefore, suggest that their owners, intended or eventual, were Mycenaean. Where these two groups were actually produced, if they were indeed produced at a single place, may still be in doubt, but the central seals of the Ayios Ioannes T. 3 Group, as well as other factors beyond the scope of this study, favor Knossos.

In determining the stylistic place that this large group occupies within the general development of Late Bronze Age glyptic, we should look at the major groups that must, chronologically, flank it. At the early end (late 16th to early 15th century B.C.), we have the Cretan Popular Group³, the Mycenae-Vapheio Lion Group, and the latter's School⁴ that continued down towards the middle of the 15th century; and, at the later end (end of the 15th to early 14th century B.C.), we find the Spectacle-Ey Group at Knossos⁵.

The Cretan Popular Group consists typically of serpentine lentoids carrying simply rendered animals (e.g., CMS V No. 222 [Fig. 16] and CMS XII No. 272 [Fig. 17]). The most distinctive traits consist of an almost continuously linear profile, few muscles and planes that protrude from what is otherwise a fairly shallow intaglio, limbs that seem small, even weak, in proportion to

³ Kadmos 22 (1983) 109–136.

⁴ Kadmos 23 (1984) 38–64.

⁵ Kadmos 25 (1986) 121–138.



Fig. 18 CMS I No. 250 from Vapheio.

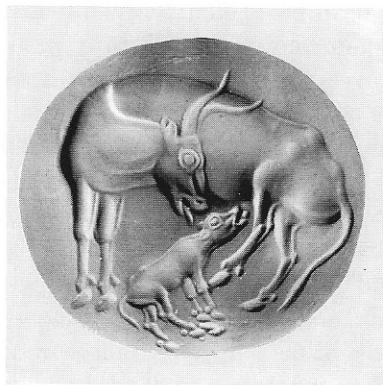


Fig. 19 CMS I No. 140 from Mycenae
T. 515.

the body, an encircled dot eye, and a harsh shoulder line; lions have the line of their lower jaw continue on to delineate the division between the head and mane; and bulls occasionally have striated necks.

The animals in the Mycenae-Vapheio Lion Group (e.g., CMS I No. 250 [Fig. 18] and CMS I No. 140 [Fig. 19]) are more monumental with distinctly formal conventions, most noticeably in the lions with their raised mane above the lowered plane of their neck. On the other hand, this group's animals seem naturalistic, with their bodies fulsomely and richly modelled, their eye characteristically elliptical (the 'almond-eye' apparently being a more formal translation of the encircled dot-eye of the CP Group), and their upper foreleg thickened with a saphena vein superimposed and crossing over it; bulls also often have a hollow nose like the one echoed on the tethered bull in the NY Metropolitan Museum, CMS XII No. 249 (Fig. 10).

Thus, we may see CP influence in the line-jawed lions of seals in both groups (the Tethered Bull's CMS XII No. 251 [Fig. 11] and Ayios Ioannes T. 3's CMS II 3 No. 64b [Fig. 8] and Orchomenos' CMS V No. 688 [Fig. 7]) and in the striated bull necks of two seals near the Group of the Tethered Bull, CMS I No. 240 (Fig. 22) and 275. But the basic, monumental type of animal (e.g., CMS V No. 432 [Fig. 21] from Ayios Ioannes T. 4), found throughout the groups we are discussing, is seen first (e.g., CMS I No. 238 [Fig. 20]) in the Mycenae-Vapheio Lion Group, though perhaps this type of animal occurs more faithfully in the Tethered Bull Group, for only in this group can we find the almond-eye and the thick upper foreleg.

The Spectacle-Eye Group (e.g., CMS II 3 No. 44 from Zafer Papoura T. 99 [Fig. 23] and CMS II 3 No. 69 from Sellopoulo T. 1 [Fig. 24]) emerges at Knossos towards the end of the XVth century, after the groups we are discussing; though very large, its basic style is extremely easy to discern. The trait common to all animals in this group is the dot-eye set in a circle made by the tubular drill. We also notice that the animals have a slimmer body that is smoothly modelled, uncluttered by extraneous anatomical detail and simplified with fewer internal modulations. Curves consist of numerous short strokes to produce as smooth a line as possible. Even more telling is the insistent use of the snub-nose drill in creating dots for most joints, even for shoulders and hips, for nose and tail tips, for both hooves and paws, and even for fleshing out the lower



Fig. 20 CMS I No. 240 from Vapheio.



Fig. 21 CMS V No. 432 from Nichoria.

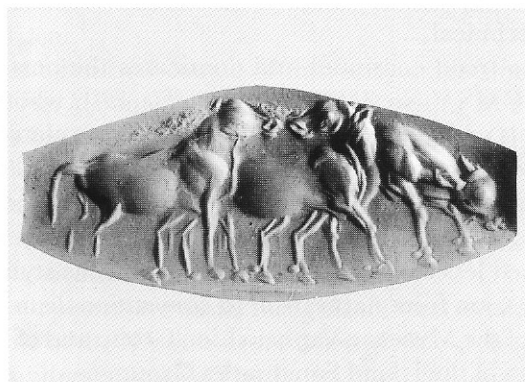


Fig. 22 CMS I No. 238 from Vapheio.

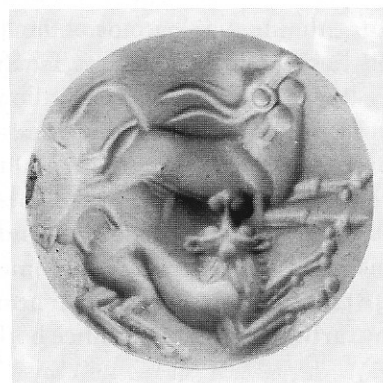


Fig. 23 CMS II 3 No. 44 from Zafer
Papoura T. 99.



Fig. 24 CMS II 3 No. 69 from
Sellopoulo T. 1.

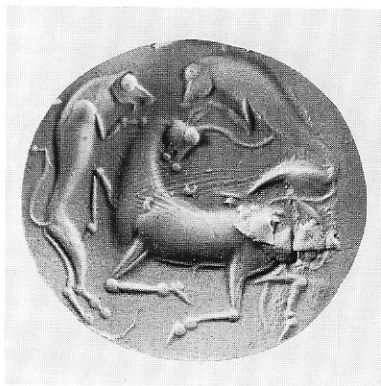


Fig. 25 CMS V No. 313 from Delos.

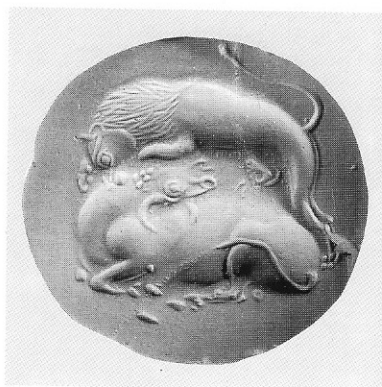


Fig. 26 CMS V No. 435 from Nichoria.

jaw as if the animal had the disease called mumps. The overall effect is clean, slightly elegant, and technical.

This trend continues and dominates the next major group, the Island Sanctuaries Group (e.g., CMS V No. 313 from Delos [Fig. 25]), whose mid-XIVth century sealstones carry svelte animals with joints, eyes, and nose tips articulated by simple dots.

It seems apparent, then, that the total general development of the hard stone seals, from the Mycenaean-Vapheio Lion Group at the end of the XVIth century (e.g., CMS V No. 435 from Nichoria [Fig. 26]) to the final Island Sanctuaries Group in the middle of the XIVth century, spanned less than two centuries. And in this stylistic course we may note a gradual but steady progression from naturalism to conventionalism – from, let us say, the powerful and muscular bulls of the Mycenaean-Vapheio Lion Group and of the Vapheio Cups to the sleek, sausage-bodied bovines of the Island Sanctuaries Group.

We may also note the same general trend within the soft stone groups, even though they were intended primarily as jewelry for the humbler folk. The simplified, almost toy-like realism of the Cretan Popular Group (e.g., CMS IV No. 300 [Fig. 27]) at the end of the XVIth century slowly becomes more technical, as evidenced by the few XVth and early XIVth century softstone imitations of hardstone gems. Finally, in the mid XIVth century, the steatite lentoids of the Mainland Popular Group carry only schematic and almost totally linear quadrupeds (e.g., CMS VII No. 204 [Fig. 28]).

If this reconstruction is correct, that in the course of fewer than two hundred years, sealstone engraving, having emerged at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age with a monumental treatment of animals that conceivably could have been translated from the bas reliefs of frescoes and stone vases, ended in conventional, mannered, and elongated styles similar to those we find also in contemporary pictorial vase painting⁶, then we may imagine that there occurred, sometime mid-way between these two extremes (ca. 1450–1400 B.C.), a transitional period when naturalistic modelling was yielding to technical conventions. We may further imagine that since both our

⁶ See E. Vermeule and V. Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial Vase-Painting* pot IV. 4.



Fig. 27 CMS IV No. 300.



Fig. 28 CMS VII No. 204.

groups should date around 1450 B.C., their sealstones were being produced during this transition's early stage when its outcome was still unclear.

Perhaps we can even partially distinguish the internal course of this early stage since the Tethered Bull Group (e.g., CMS XII No. 249 [Fig. 10]) may be considered, according to this reconstruction, stylistically earlier than the Ayios Ioannes Bulls (e.g., CMS XII No. 248 [Fig. 3]): while the former set uses richer modelling, softer transitions, thicker legs, the almond-eye, and fewer dots, the Ayios Ioannes Bulls reveal more technical conventions, smoother modelling, de-emphasized transitions, brittle legs, and more dots not only for joints, horn knobs, and hooves, but also for fleshing out the lower jaw and for the beady dot-eye.

While the end points of the total stylistic development are easily recognizable, each flaunting its own set of formal conventions, it is the middle of the XVth century when glyptic styles seem confusing, though perhaps we can now better understand why. The artists of this generation or two were changing from the monumental and naturalistic emphasis of the earlier masters to a conventional style that depended more and more on leaving the processes and marks of their technique visible, yet at the same time they softened all engraved surfaces to a fluid and tight plasticity. During this transitional period, however, no one artist was apparently able to achieve this change-over completely, but rather all of them experimented and drew freely both from the traditional approaches of their predecessors and from the innovations of their colleagues. No doubt our interest in this period reflects their excitement; our confusion certainly reflects the intense dialogue over their choices.

APPENDIX

The groups discussed here are published in *Kadmos* 24 (1985) 57–58 and 65–66.

The Tethered Bull Group (Knossos? ca. 1450 B.C.)

?CMS I Suppl. No. 34 from Kakovatos Tholos 2 (LH IIA context); CMS XII Nos. 249 (Fig. 10), 251 (Fig. 11), and 389; and CMS XIII No. 26 (Fig. 12)

Close: CMS I No. 239 from Vapheio; CMS V No. 434 from Nichoria (LH IIIA₂-B context); CMS VIII No. 89 possibly from Crete; CMS IX No. 133; and CS 243

Near:

a) subgroup in here?: CMS I Nos. 240 (*Fig. 22*) from Vapheio, and 275 from Rutsi (LH II-III A₁ context); and a lentoid from Dendra/Midea T. 2 (LH IIIA₂ [E.W. and H.W. Catling, BSA 69, 1974, 254] or B₁ context; Persson, Royal Tombs pls. 28a and 34c middle)

b) CMS I No. 283 from Rutsi (LH II-III A₁ context)

Near, a subgroup: CMS I Nos. 230 and 237, both from Vapheio (LH IIA context)

Related: CMS I No. 509 from Crete

Associated sealing: CMS I No. 19 from Mycenae (LH IIIB context)

The Bulls from Ayios Ioannes T. 3 (Knossos? ca. 1450 B.C.)

CMS II 3 Nos. 62 (*Fig. 1*) and 64 (*Figs. 8 and 9*), both from Ayios Ioannes T. 3 (LM IIB context), and 293 from Limnes Mirabellou; CMS V Nos. 433 (*Fig. 4*) from Nichoria (LH IIIA₂-B context), and 688 (*Fig. 7*) from Orchomenos; CMS VII No. 127 (*Fig. 5*); CMS XII Nos. 235 (*Fig. 6*) from Crete?, and 248

Close:

Dot noses

a) a subgroup here?: CMS I No. 286 from Rutsi (LH IIA-III A₁ context); and CMS VII No. 192 (Pini publishes new photographs of both these seals, JRGZM 28, 1981, 48-81 Nos. 15 and 59, respectively)

b) CMS V Nos. 195, and 196; AM 1941. 125 = CS 299 from Argypolis, Crete; and a lentoid once in the Arndt Collection (GGFR pl. 186)

Hollow noses

c) a subgroup here?: CMS V No. 432 from Nichoria (LH IIIA₂-B context); and AM 1938. 1029 = CS 311 (GGFR pl. 105)

Close: CMS X No. 316 from Crete

d) CMS I Nos. 109 from Mycenae T. 78, 142 from Mycenae T. 515 (LH IIB context), and 241 from Vapheio

e) also close to the Group of the Crystal Rings, Muzzle Subgroup: CMS XIII No. 78 acquired at Mycenae

Wounded Bulls

f) CMS I Suppl. No. 77 from Crete: CMS V Nos. 645 and 646, both from Gouvalari Tholos 2 (LH IIA context); and AGDS II Berlin 46 bought in the Peloponnese

Close, a subgroup: CMS IX No. 119; and HM 2093 from the Royal Road, Knossos (cf. KretKhron 17, 1963, 355)

Miscellaneous: CMS I No. 517 from Knossos

Fragment: CMS VIII No. 91 from Crete?

Near: MCG 224; and CMS II 3 No. 226 from the Diktaian Cave

Associated sealing: CMS I No. 318 from Pylos (LH IIIB₂-C₁ context).

DISKUSSION

J. BETTS stellt die Frage, ob über die Periode der Mykener in Knossos gesprochen wurde.

J.G. YOUNGER verneint dies.

J. BETTS bittet genauer darzulegen, wieviele der behandelten Stücke vom Festland stammen und wieviele aus Kreta. Außerdem möchte er J.G. Younger's Ansicht über Handelsbeziehungen erfahren.

J.G. YOUNGER antwortet, daß er in dieser Periode nicht zwischen Festland und Kreta unterscheiden kann. Er ist zwar in der Lage, bestimmte Gruppen auszusondern und Vermutungen zu äußern, wo sie gefertigt wurden. Ethnische Unterscheidungen kann er aber zwischen den Siegel-schneidern nicht machen. Außerdem handelt es sich hier, im frühen 15. Jh., um eine Zeit, in der derselbe Stil vorherrschte und dieselben Künstler zu beiden Seiten des kretischen Meeres arbeiteten. Die Kreter hatten einen dominierenden Einfluß und könnten seiner Meinung nach die Mykener auf dem Festland angelernt haben. Doch zögert er, besonders in dieser Periode, zu sagen, wer hier Meister und wer Lehrling gewesen ist.

I. PINI verweist zur Klärung der Frage nach festländischer oder kretischer Herkunft auf die Profile der Siegel dieser Gruppe. Sie sind in ihrer stark bikonvexen Form einander alle sehr ähnlich, sehr exakt ausgeführt und haben einen größeren Durchmesser als normal. Nach seiner Ansicht kommt der größere Teil vom Festland. Einige Stücke aus Knossos belegten dort Beziehungen zum Festland, denen sogar W.-D. Niemeier in SM II zustimmen dürfte. Er kann noch keine Beweise anführen, aber es gibt einige gute Gesichtspunkte, die für einen festländischen Ursprung sprechen. Knossos und andere kretische Werkstätten sind von dort beeinflußt worden.

J.G. YOUNGER stimmt mit I. Pini grundsätzlich darin überein, daß es ein dominierendes mykenisches Element gibt. Seiner Meinung nach sind die Siegel, deren Besitzer Mykener waren, in Knossos und nicht auf dem Festland hergestellt worden. Er kann aber nicht sicher sagen, daß ein Mykener zu einem knossischen Siegel-schneider gekommen ist und ein schönes, fettes Lentoid mit bikonvexem Profil aus einem ganz bestimmten Stein in Auftrag gegeben hat. Doch kann er auch diese Möglichkeit nicht ausschließen.

J. BETTS ist der Ansicht, daß der von J.G. Younger gezeigte Wandel von einem bestimmten Grad an Naturalismus zu mehr offen gelegter Technik zu einer Stilisierung führte, wie sie im folgenden Jahrhundert anzutreffen ist. Er würde gerne wissen, ob in der unmittelbar folgenden Periode zwischen einer festländischen und einer kretischen Richtung unterschieden werden kann. Die „Spectacle-Eye Group“ (J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 25, 1986, 121 ff.), besonders die Beispiele mit den großen, fetten „mumps“, scheint ihm fast vollständig kretisch zu sein. Auch wenn sie auf dem Festland gefunden worden sind, ist ihre Formgebung eigentümlich; so als ob sich jemand versucht hatte, der nicht sonderlich geübt war. Aber sie sind absolut charakteristisch für Kreta. In einer Periode, in der man eher eine Wechselbeziehung zwischen Kreta und dem Festland erwartete, fehlen diese Charakteristika. Andererseits kommt dieselbe Tendenz zu technischer Virtuosität oder Stilisierung auf dem Festland vor. J.G. Younger hat hierfür ein Beispiel aus der Gruppe einander überschneidender Löwen und Rinder mit sehr stilisierten Muskeln gezeigt, die sie beide „Mu-headed Bull“ (Younger Abb. 14) nennen. Diese Art der Stilisierung ist in der Tat ein festländisches Phänomen. In der auf diese schwierige Periode folgenden Phase ist es viel leichter, festländische von kretischen Tendenzen zu trennen.