While seals were continuously manufactured in Crete for more than a 1,000 years, from the middle of the 3rd millennium until at least the middle 14th century (fn 1), most of the seals from the Mainland belong to the brief spring of EH II and then, after a long interval, to at least the first two centuries of the Mycenaean period (ca. 1550-1350 B.C.).

For this latter period, the earliest seal from the Mainland is the well-known CMS I 5, the tiny amethyst disc from Shaft Grave Gamma at Mycenae that carries a bearded man’s head in profile. It was long presumed that its provenience alone guaranteed its Mainland manufacture and that therefore the bearded man must have been a Mycenaeans, until John H. Betts demonstrated conclusively (fn. 2) that, no, the seal is indeed Minoan in manufacture, made in Crete by a Cretan artist, and that the portrait is of a special class of individual, probably a priest.

The next seals from the Mainland come from Shaft Graves III and IV at Mycenae and these and others from slightly later contexts seem to have been engraved by an artist trained in Minoan techniques but heading in a highly individual, perhaps Mycenaean direction (fn. 3); this new style, the Mycenae–Vapheio Lion Group, influenced the more impressive gems that followed, both in Crete and on the Mainland.
Seals dating to the Early Bronze Age on the Mainland and in the Islands and to the Early and Middle Minoan periods in Crete have received some attention. Paul Yule's study, Early Cretan Seals outlines the major stylistic groups, technical classes, and iconography for Minoan seals from the earlier phases of the Middle Minoan period; the present author has published a sketch of the later Middle Minoan groups (fn. 4); but Early Minoan seals still await a systematic study. Martha Wiencke (fn. 5) has presented the primary evidence for the Early Helladic seals, or rather for their designs as preserved impressed on sealings primarily from the Argolid, and the present author compiled a short skeletal study of the contemporary Cycladic material (fn. 6). But apart from these bare presentations, little synoptic work has been done on EH glyptic.

Nonetheless, it is clear (at least to the present author) that on the Early Helladic Mainland there were two, basically different functions for stamp-seals; to distinguish them, we should call one type, a seal, and the other type, a stamp. Not unexpectedly, a distinct repertory of shapes and motifs correspond to each type of seal-stamp.

To be brief, there were EH seals that functioned bureaucratically (to impress sealings with a bureaucratically "correct" motif) and there were EH stamps that functioned artistically (to imprint cloth, clay vessels, or the flesh with patterns, most ultimately derived from textiles; fn. 7).
For the first type, the seal, we have ample evidence: the EH sealings from the Argolid (fn. 8) and the designs they preserve. These designs display a remarkable consistency: almost all are organized on the principle of symmetry, especially radial symmetry; all the designs are circular; and many, though quite complex at first glance, fall into families of extremely similar designs that differ amongst themselves only in small details, like the number of loops. Compare the family of designs CMS V 54-64, each consisting of three loops around a central space, at first empty (V 54 & 55), then filled with a swastika (56), a spider (57 & 58), a trefoil (60-64), or some other object (59). What such design families imply has not yet been worked out, but it does not stretch credulity too much to imagine that seals belonging to one design family may have referred to one type of bureaucratic function or functionaire.

Most of the bureaucratic EH seals that impressed these designs probably took the shape of "ivory" (fn. 9) stamp cylinders (cf. the cylinder CMS II 1.243 from Platanos with the Lerna sealing CMS V 62), many of which carry two designs, one on each face, anticipating the later trend in bureaucratic sealing for multifacial seals (fn. 10).

For the second type, the stamp, we also have good evidence. Stamps were used to decorate numerous personal objects in the EH & EC periods: roll-cylinders, of which we have the fragment of one extant (CMS Beiheft 3, 19-25), decorated Mainland pithoi with linear designs (e.g., CMS V 120-148); stamps carrying circles decorated Cycladic hearth rims (V 451-455 and others) and Frying Pans (e.g., V 460; fn. 11); and other stamps marked pottery from
both areas (e.g., V 467 from Ayia Irini, 52 from Lerna; cf. the stamped sherds from Euboia V 202 and 203, Zygouries V 503, Asine V 522, and Troy city IIB [Kadmos 25, 1986, 164-7]).

With the EH II destructions and the passing away of the highly complex society that centered about the Corridor House, we would expect the practice of bureaucratic sealing also to pass away, but not, however, the practice of decorative stamping.

Let us see what evidence we have for the continuation of this latter practice into the Middle Helladic/Cycladic period (see Appendix for the catalogue of stamps in the discussion that follows).

First, we may omit the stamp-seals that, though from EH III-MH contexts, were obviously made earlier and/or in Crete:

I Supp. 52, the foot amulet from Ayios Kosmos, is certainly Early Minoan (Branigan, SMEA 11, 1970, 7-23; Pini, SMEA 15, 1972, 179-187; Yule, ECS, 96-97, Shape 33h); cf. II 1.212 from Lenda (EM II context)

V 423, the stamped hearth rim? from Lefkandi, preserves a design similar to one also on a hearth rim, EH/EC II context, from Ayia Irini, V 461

V 469, stamped hearth rim from Ayia Irini, carries an oval impression that most probably came from an early Cretan "ivory" stamp, much like II 1.11, 16, 20, 25, 30, 58, 59, 65, 78, etc.; the motif is a variant on interlocking C-spirals -- cf. V 46 & 51 from Lerna and 467 & 468 from Ayia Irini, all EH/EC II.

Second, the EH III

It is almost certain that nearly all such stamps are signs of a tradition from II IC onward, and that the cylinders used were incising tools.

A loom weight was found among much debris from V 523 & 524 to the south of the Minoan temple. It may belong to MM II or MM IIA, or perhaps late MM IB. It has a horizontal row of 48 linear grooves, each 1.417 cm long. If this pattern does not occur on a loom weight, then we must assume that loom weights were made separately from stamped pottery. The steatite cylinder is entirely destroyed, and the stamping seems unidentifiable. The motif is a variant on interlocking C-spirals -- cf. V 46 & 51 from Lerna and 467 & 468 from Ayia Irini, all EH/EC II.
V 523 & 668, steatite conoids from Asine and Thebes, respectively, resemble early Cretan stamps, both in their shapes (compare V 523 with II 1.88 from Ayia Triada, EM I-MM II context, & with II 1.163 from Koumasa, EM I-MM I/II context; and compare V 668 with II 1.87, EM I-MM II context, from Ayia Triada) and in their motifs (the dots & lines on V 523 vaguely resemble other chaotic designs like those on II 1.257 from Platanos, MM IA-II context, and II 1.417 from Mallia; and the outlined cross on V 668 belongs to a large family of cross-designs (see below and fn 13) -- cf. II 1.288 from Platanos, MM IA-II context, and II 5.92 from Phaistos, MM IIB? context)

The steatite pendant from Eutresis carries hatching, the usual motif on the similarly shaped Early Minoan concave-convex plates, "epomia" (Yule, ECS pp. 38-39 & 54-55), and other stamps (e.g., II 1.167 from Koumasa, EM I-MM I/II context)

Second, the stamped pottery.

EH III

It is quite likely that the EH III pithoi from Lerna and nearby sites represent a restricted phenomenon, since such impressed pithoi are not found later or significantly far away. It is also possible that the EH III pithoi may have been roll-impressed by roll-cylinders from the previous period. In any case, they are interesting but isolated.

A loomweight from Asea was stamped with a simple cross, much like those on the simple cylindrical stamp II 1.200 from Lenda (EM I? context), V 37 (FIG. 2) from Lerna IV,
and as scoring on the "ivory" handle II 1.15 from Ayia Triada (EM I-MM II context); if Banks is correct and the loomweight comes from a EH III context, then the stamp that impressed it was likely to have been an early Cretan one.

MH/MC

Stamped MH/MC pottery seems to be common. What follows is not a catalogue, simply a reminder.

A stamped sherd from Samos carries a whirl, which finds a very close parallel on the stamped EC II body sherd V 460 from from Ayia Irini; if the whirl resembles the center of an interlocking spiral design, then compare V 159 and K.3959, both impressed EC II hearth rims from Ayia Irini. The stamped sherd from Samos, then, may be contemporary with EC wares but found in a later context.

Stamped Gray Minyan sherds from Eutresis and MC dark burnished wares from Ayia Irini are stamped with simple circles and Kerbschnitt, designs that are typical on EC pottery. Compare the many hearth rims from Ayia Irini (circles on V 451-455, Kerbschnitt on hearth rims K.3882, 3883), the one EH hearth from Lerna V 149, decorated with Kerbschnitt, and the many Frying Pans stamped with circles (see fn 11). The practice of stamping pottery with such simple designs is obviously a long one, though I am unaware of it continuing much into the Late Bronze Age (fn 12).
Another sherd from Eutresis, an Argive Minyan sherd

(Eutresis, p. 130 fig. 176.2), is painted with a common
cross pattern with parallel arcs in the quadrants (for
the triple parallel lines forming the cross, see II
5.93-95 etc. from MM IIB? Phaistos and II 1.196a from
Lenda, EM I? context; and for the arcs in the quadrants,
see II 1.47 from Ayia Triada, EM I-MM II context). Such
crosses, the chevroned cross and its variants,
constitute one of the oldest and most ubiquitous motifs
in the Aegean and Near East, from the Neolithic period
well into the Middle Bronze Age (fn. 13)

Third, the 10 stamps (mostly clay) from dated EH III-MH/MC
contexts (V 36-39 from Lerna IV [FIGS. 1-4]; three (FIGS. 6
& 7] from Ayios Stephanos; and one each from Asea [FIG. 5],
Argissa Magoula [FIG. 8], and Akrotiri [FIG. 9])

To anticipate my conclusions: I view these stamps as locally
made, perfectly appropriate to their dated context, mostly
influenced by a long tradition of clay stamps with linear
designs reaching back into the Neolithic period and
extending geographically from the Balkans through the
Aegean and Anatolia into the northern Levant but also
influenced, in a much less degree, by contemporary Cretan
seals.

For the shapes:

Of these 10 stamps, eight are clay conoids, roughly as tall
as the diameter of their face. For the shape, they have
parallels that date as far back as the Neolithic period
For the Akrotiri stamp (FIG. 9), compare II 1.298 from Platanos (MM IA-II context);
for the Asea stamp (FIG. 5), compare II 1.303 from Platanos (MM IA-II context);
for the Argissa Magoula stamp V 516 (FIG. 8), compare II 1.150 from Koumasa (EM II-MM II context);
for Ayios Stephanos 261 (FIG. 6; Taylour thinks of it as Mediaeval), compare II 1.55 from Ayia Triada (EM I-MM II context).

For Ayios Stephanos 278 (FIG. 7), compare the equally carefully sculpted seal V 518 (FIG. 13) from Poliochni, Blue period/early EBA context with a variant on the chevroned cross.

For the blank or unengraved stamp from Ayios Stephanos; it has a large elliptical face and a short handle, much like Makkay 300 from Bulgaria or V 708 from Nea Nikomedia, both Neolithic.

V 37 (FIG. 2) is of stone, much taller, a variation on the stamp in the shape of a cow leg (Yule, ECS p. 95f., Shape 33g "Hooves") like II 1.170 from Lenda (EM II-MM IA context), a shape which is a more refined version of the simple shaped tusk II 1.79 from Ayia Triada (EM I-MM II context) or 143 EM I-MM I/II context) from Koumasa; other, similar versions include II 1.135 from Koumasa EM I-MM I/II context), 200 (EM I? context) & 221 (EM II-MM I context), both from Lenda, 376 from Siva (EM I-MM IA context), and
Perhaps the closest parallels include V 19 (stone, unfinished?) from Myrtos, EM II context, and an almost exact twin, also of stone, in the University of Mississippi Museums, Oxford MS, no. J11, once in the DM Robinson Coll.

Another stamp from Lerna IV is V 39 (FIG. 4), a terracotta ring. Though there are no Neolithic parallels, the lay-out of the design into two sets of outlined loops (on the stamp) can be seen on V 681 from Eutresis (Neolithic-EH context). The ring-shape derives from the class of early Cretan rings (Yule, ECS pp. 76-77, Shapes 28a-c), though it is unique in two aspects: it is the only one of clay and its design is virtually unknown in the early Cretan repertory (but compare XII 6D, a & b); it is likely that the shape copies contemporary EM late to early MM rings of "ivory" but the motif comes from the earlier, Neolithic tradition.

For the designs:

All these stamps carry simple linear designs. The Asea (FIG. 5), Akrotiri (FIG. 9), and Lerna V 37 (FIG. 2) stamps have nearly identical designs, a single line flanked by short parallel strokes; while this design finds no exact comparisons, see the various branch motifs like II 1.160 from Koumasa and other linear designs like II 1.21 from Ayia Triada (EM I-MM II context) and 433 from the Trapeza Cave (EM I-MM IA? context).
Ayios Stephanos 261 (FIG. 6) and Lerna V 38 (FIG. 3) have cross patterns. The Ayios Stephanos stamp finds an almost exact parallel in II 1.466b from Gournia, "Early Period", and compare 478 from Mochlos ChT II (EM II-MM IA context), 148b from Koumasa (EM II-MM II context), 366 from Porti (EM II-MM IB context), and II 5.103 from Phaistos (MM IIB? context). Lerna V 38 (FIG. 3) carries the nearly ubiquitous motif of cross with filling designs (here, four different linear motifs) in the quadrants; compare again V 518 (FIG. 13) from Poliochni, early EBA context.

The last engraved stamp, Ayios Stephanos 278 (FIG. 7), is a carefully made conical stamp with a nicely articulated base; the face and the entire surface of the body of the stamp is covered with shallow holes, somewhat evenly spaced. Three Cretan seals have their body similarly punctuated: II 1.82 from Ayia Triada (EM I-MM II context) has several holes on the body, and 84, also from the same context at Ayia Triada, has two spirals outlined in holes, 206 from Lenda (MM IA context) has holes all over the surface of the body. Such holes may once have held material of a color contrasting with the material of the seal, as II 1.84 with the spirals outlined in holes suggests, similar to the larger inlays on the body of seals like II 1.156 from Koumasa (EM II-MM II context), which still carries inlaid rosettes of shell, and 337 from Platanos (MM IA-II context), which is missing its inlays.
While few Bronze Age Aegean seals have faces that carry holes (compare II 1.479 from Palaikastro), earlier and more disparate objects abound, and it is to these that Taylour rightly compares the Ayios Stephanos stamp, to the similar conical stamps from Neolithic SE Europe, the Balkans, and Macedonia: I 1 from Sesklo, and V 699 & 700 from Nea Nikomedia; and Makkay nos. 213 from Bulgaria, 241 from Hungary (this stamp also has holes all over the surface of the body), 251 & 264 from Romania; compare Schliemann, Ilios, p. 415 nos. 497 & 498 from Troy city III. There are other, larger clay objects whose faces carry holes (V 698 from Nea Nikomedia; Makkay 135 from Albania; and Ilios, p. 414 no. 488 from Troy III). This last, Schliemann identifies, probably correctly, as the "Handle of a Trojan Brush, with the holes in which the bristles have been fixed."

Conclusions

After we omit the apparent Minoan imports and consider the few stamped pots as possible carry-overs from earlier practices, we are left with 10 terracotta stamps from EH III-MH or MBA contexts. While conical stamps are known in contemporary Crete, and so too are most of the designs, one factor stands out -- almost all our stamps are of clay, a rare material in the Bronze Age and especially rare in contemporary early Crete (fn 14).

If we are to look for more conical terracotta stamps with linear designs outside the Middle Bronze Age Aegean, we find them, and
lots of them; amongst the Neolithic to Early Bronze Age pintaderas; a glance through Makkay will convince one of this assertion.

It would seem that our MBA stamps continued an old tradition, a tradition that elsewhere (fn. 15) I have called a "koiné". This koiné is defined by a remarkably uniform set of clay and stone stamps with linear motifs (especially the "chevroned cross", meanders, and spirals) found throughout a wide area from Central Europe through Greece, Anatolia, Cyprus, to the northern Levant and in contexts dating from the Neolithic into the Early Bronze Age.

In the Aegean, we can see this tradition clearly (see Appendix): first, the Neolithic terracotta pintaderas (Appendix part A), then the few EH/EBA terracotta stamps (Appendix part B), and finally the similar stamps from EH III & MH/MC contexts (Appendix part C; fn. 16). Once we can recognize this tradition, we can assign to our corpus the similar terracotta, conical stamps with linear designs from undated contexts (Appendix part D).

That we have few of these clay stamps in the BA Aegean is not surprising. We should not necessarily expect many to have survived — only when burnt or preserved under dry conditions.

Indeed, from the fact that we have not a single one from the burnt EH II, Lerna III levels of House BG and the Corridor House of the Tiles, we should probably infer that the function of these stamps was part of an industry that took place not within those bureaucratic structures but rather farther away, perhaps in other areas more devoted to domestic procedures.
APPENDIX

A CATALOGUE OF AEGEAN "KOINE" TERRACOTTA STAMPS

NEOLITHIC - MIDDLE BRONZE AGE

A. From Neolithic contexts

Conical stamps

I 1, 3; V 450, 515, 691-697, 699?, 700-712, 715, 722 (foot-stamp), 724; Makkay 51?, 215, 216, 301

Other stamps: I 2, 4; V 514, 681, 713, 714, 716 (stone), 717-721, 723; Makkay 1, 2, 81-83, 185, 288

Roll-cylinders: V 633-636; Makkay 50, 232

Not stamps?: V 449 (handle?), 689 (brush?); Makkay 172?, 176

B. EBA I-II

Poliochni, Lemnos

V 518 (FIG. 13) conical terracotta stamp from a Blue period (early EBA) context: a variant on the chevroned cross.

C. EH III - MH/MC/MM

The Mainland

EH III

Lerna (Phase IV)

Stamps

V 36 (FIG. 1) terracotta conoid: central dot, wavy line surrounds (cf. the stamps from Ithaca [BSA 35, 1934/5, 36 fig. 31.155, pl. 9.155] & Archanes Tholos C, #2 [JRGZM 27, 1980, 1-12, fig. 5])

V 37 (FIG. 2) stone stamp: central line, striations flank

V 38 (FIG. 3) terracotta conoid: cross with chevrons etc. in quadrants

V 39 (FIG. 4) terracotta ring: 2 sets of rectangles with central line

Roll-Impressed Pithoi

V 121: running spirals

V 122: circles

V 123?: spirals

V 124: 3 panels containing spirals

V 127: spirals

V 130: concentric circles & panels containing parallel chevrons

V 131: running & interlocking spirals

V 138: parallel zig-zags

V 141?: wavy lines

Roll-Impressed Hearth Rim

V 146: 27 panels: interlocking S-spirals (cf. V 124 & Phaistos hearth rim)
Asea
terracotta stamp (FIG. 5) from Asea (Holmberg, Asea 117, fig. 112.2; "MH"; E. Banks: "EH III"): central line flanked by striations
impressed loomweight from Asea (Asea 117, fig. 112.1; "MH"; E. Banks: "EH III"): cross
a cylindrical, clay, unperforated, object from Asea (Asea 117, fig. 112.3; "MH"; E. Banks: "EH III"), perhaps a stamp but it more likely a lump of clay from a house roof, impressed against reeds

Miscellaneous
I Supp. 52, foot amulet from Ayios Kosmas: dots
?V 423 stamped hearth rim from Lefkandi: cross with V's in quadrants (quadripartite design)

EH III-MH I
V 523, stone cone from Asine: a) dots & lines, b) short rays surround 5 central dots

MH
Eutresis
steatite pendant (Eutresis, p. 199, pl. 20.2): hatching stamped Gray Minyan sherds (Eutresis, fig. 197.1, 5, 11): a) zig-zags, b) centered concentric circles, c) circles &?

Ayios Stephanos
unengraved ring with elliptical bezel, MH II-II context (Branigan, SMEA 17, 1976, 165-6)
terracotta stamp HS 261 (FIG. 6; BSA 67, 1972, 243, pl. 51 e & f): cross with a dot in each quadrant (cf. II 4.466, Gournia "Early Period")
terracotta stamp HS 278 (FIG. 7), EH-LH IIB context (BSA 67, 1972, 247, pl. 51h): holes in both face and surface of the body
terracotta stamp HS no. unknown, unpublished, unengraved

Miscellaneous
V 516 (FIG. 8) terracotta stamp from Argissa Magoula: lines (MB early; cf. V 502)
V 668 steatite cone from Thebes: chevroned cross, variant unengraved ring with elliptical bezel from Corinth, MH II-III context (Branigan, SMEA 17, 1976, 165-6)
I 5, of amethyst, from Shaft Grave Gamma, Mycenae (MH end to LH I context): bearded man's head in profile to right.

The Islands
EB 3
V 469, stamped hearth rim from Ayia Irini (phase C): addorsed C-spirals & filler
MC
gray burnished pottery from Ayia Irini (phase D; Hesperia 41, 1972, 382-3, D 137 & D 138, pl. 84.9): concentric circles
terracotta stamp (FIG. 9) from Akrotiri, Thera, Zeste 3, south layer (Thera VII 32, pl. 56d): central line flanked by striations

MBA
stamped sherd from Samos (Milojcic, Samos I, 1969, pl. 49.2): whirl

Crete
Platanos
II 1.297 (FIG. 14) cylindrical terracotta stamp, from a MM IA-II context: conical stamp with chaotic linear design

D. From later or undated contexts
Lerna
V 40 (FIG. 10) conical terracotta stamp, a surface find: two crosses set obliquely to each other; (cf. the almost exact parallel in II 1.21 from Ayia Triada (EM I-MM II context)
V 41 (FIG. 11) conical terracotta stamp from a mixed context: loop design with central circle (perhaps a sloppy variation on such loops as II 5.162, 166, etc. from Phaistos, MM IIB? context)

Grotta, Naxos
V 603 (FIG. 12) conical terracotta stamp with a hammer-head handle, from a Submycenean context: cross with a chevron in each quadrant. The hammer-head handle has parallels in Crete (Yule, ECS, pp. 81-82, Shape 31b, especially II 1.46, 210, 445); the chevroned cross is ubiquitous from Neolithic into the early MBA (see fn. 13)
Footnotes

*Abbreviations in this paper conform to those recommended by the American Journal of Archaeology (AJA) 95 (1991) 1-16. In addition:

Makkay = J. Makkay, Early Stamp Seals in South-East Europe (Akadémiai Kiadó; Budapest, 1984)

Roman numerals followed by Arabic numbers refer to CMS volumes and their catalogued seals (e.g., V 36 = CMS vol. V, #36)


4. JG Younger, "Bronze Age Aegean Seals in their Middle Phase (ca. 1700-1550 B.C.)," Aegaeum 3 (1989) 53-64.


7. E.J.W. Barber, Prehistoric Textiles, pp. 175 & 226, does not much discuss this practice of using stamps to imprint cloth with stained or dyed patterns, though this practice flourished in Greece until fairly recently. These modern stamps, generally of wood, are called "stamboi".

8. Sealings from the EH Mainland:
EH: from Corinth (Hesp. Supp. 8, 1949, 421, pl. 63): ?
EH II: Lerna (Phase III; V 43-119); Asine (V 519-521)
EH II?: sealing from Akovitika (AJA 93, 1989, 496-7: pattern resembles one from Lerna); sealings reported from Spetsai (newspaper Hestia 26 September 1970)
For comparison, here are the three known sealings from EM Crete:

EM II:
V 20 from Mochlos (chevroned cross) from Trypiti on the south coast (Arkhaiologia 30, 1989, 52-6, fig. 7: parallel lines [zig-zags?])


10. J. Weingarten, The Zakro Master and his Place in Prehistory (SIMA Pocketbook 26; Paul Astrâms Förlag; Göteborg, 1983).


12. An unpublished sherd from Ayia Irini (K.4321, LB I destruction level) is of local clay and sports a raised boss of clay which a lentoid impressed with a lion or agrimi.

13. Chevroned cross (M-numbers are Makkay numbers):
EN (Prototype): from Hungary (M 97) and Haçilar (Mellaart 164 fig. 187.7);
EN-MN: from Greece (CMS I 3, Sesklo; and V 721, Tsani Magoula, prototype or related design); and from Byblos (Byblos V 125-126, fig. 76 no. 29564);
LN: from the Balkans (M 118, Hungary; 195, Yugoslavia; and 210 Bulgaria);
Chalcolithic – EBA: from Czechoslovakia (M 282) and Hungary (M 118); from Alishar Hüyük (Alishar Hüyük 1930-32 81 fig. 87, c481; e1909; e1481; & e576); from Byblos (Byblos V 326-329 fig. 202 nos. 22987 & 33808);
EB I: from Greece (CMS V 48, a sealing from Lerna; V 52, a stamped jar handle from Lerna; V 470, etc., stamped hearth rims from Ayia Irini in Keos); from Anatolia (Karatas [Mellink, AJA 71, 1967, 264 pl. 84.55 no. KA 372; compare KA 111, 128, 131, 398, 399, 418]); and Tarsus (Tarsus 23 fig. 392.7);
EB III or later: from Greece (CMS V 486 from Ayia Irini in Keos; and V 518 from Poliochni); and Anatolia (Schliemann, Ilios no. 1212 from Troy IV; and Tarsus fig. 393.27, MB context, from Tarsus).
MBA: from Crete (CMS II 5.93-95 etc. from MM IIB? Phaistos and II 1.196a from Lenda, EM ? context).


15. JG Younger, "A Glyptic Koiné: The Balkans, the Aegean, and Anatolia in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age," in Pepragmena
16. There are two enigmatic, terracotta conical objects: II 1.419 from the Chrysolakkos cemetery at Mallia (MM IB-II context) and the extremely similar HMS 205 from Knossos (see Pini, fn. 14 above, pp. 77-79, pls. XIV & XV); both function as conical terracotta holders for terracotta casts of actual stone seals stuck to their bases; these resemble "dop" holders, that is, handles that hold stones about to be engraved. The Mallia "holder" preserves the earliest example of the motif of lion curling about and attacking a bull; the Knossos "holder" a somewhat similar scene in the much later style of the loose Dot-Eye Mumps Group (end of the 15th century; Kadmos 24, 1985, 72). If these objects are not dop holders, then it is possible that they might be stamps, and if so, they then would give the koiné tradition a new twist, substituting seal motifs, actually cast from seals, for the conventional linear motifs on the stamps; and that the Knossos object might allow us to see this koiné tradition prolonged in the Aegean into the Late Bronze Age.
1. CMS V 36, Lerna

2. CMS V 37, Lerna

3. CMS V 38, Lerna

4. CMS V 39, Lerna

5. Stamp from Asea

6. Ayios Stephanos 261

7. Ayios Stephanos 278

Younger, "MH Seals?" FIGS.
Younger, "MH Seals?" FIGS.

9. Stamp from Akrotiri

8. CMS V 516, Argissa Magoula

10. CMS V 40, Lerna

12. CMS V 603, Grotta, Naxos

11. CMS V 41, Lerna

14. CMS II 1.297, Platanos, Crete

13. CMS V 518, Poliochmi, Lemnos