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VERLAG PHILIPP VON ZABERN · MAINZ am Rhein

ATTRIBUTING AEGEAN SEALS: LOOKING BACK, GLANCING AHEAD*

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INTRODUCTION

In identifying the artists of Aegean sealstones we can sometimes point to their workshops¹ and to their unfinished pieces.² We can identify pairs of seals cut from the same block of stone undoubtedly by the same hand³ like the two seals from Mycenae Chamber Tomb 515, CMS I Nos. 144–145 (*Fig. 1 a–b*), found on either side of the stomion of the tomb (they are identical except for the way the lions' tails curve). From two island sanctuaries come two pairs of lentoid seals (*Figs. 2–3*) that are almost identical in motive and material:⁴ each pair carries a grazing bovine and a running quadruped; three of the seals are limestone cut from the same block (the fourth seal is fluorite).⁵

Attribution on grounds of style may seem daunting, but it has become fashionable again. In the face of globalization, post-modernism stresses the individual contribution, and 'pomo' archaeology now 'populates the landscape'.⁶ Several scholars like Karl-Erik Sjöquist, Paul Åström, and Julie Hruby have compiled fingerprints on pottery and tablets,⁷ and shortly before his death John Betts wrote a passionate defense of attribution.⁸

* Source of illustrations, *Fig. 5a*: photograph courtesy of the Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri at Columbia; *Fig. 5b*: drawing by J. Huffstet; remaining figures from CMS archives.

¹ Malia workshop: J.-C. Poursat in: CMS Beih. 6, 257–268; Poros workshop: N. Dimopoulou in: CMS Beih. 6, 27–38.

² J.G. Younger, Expedition 23.4, 1981, 31–38.

³ E.g., CMS I Nos. 265 and 267 from Tragana Tomb 2, cut from the same block of conglomerate. Also CMS I Nos. 140–141; CMS III Nos. 372 and 382.

⁴ CMS V Nos. 499–500 from the Temple at Ayia Irini in Kea and CMS V Suppl. 1B Nos. 38 and 40 from the Mycenaean Sanctuary, East Shrine, at Phylakopi in Melos.

⁵ A bovine grazes on one pair of limestone lentoids (CMS V No. 500 from Kea and CMS V Suppl. 1B No. 40 from Melos) and a caprid runs on the remaining limestone lentoid from Kea (CMS V No. 499) while a bovine, perhaps, runs on the fluorite from Melos (CMS V Suppl. 1B No. 38).

⁶ Cf. L. Meskell in: I. Hodder (ed.), *Archaeological Theory Today* (2001), 187–201; and I. Hodder – S. Huston (eds.), *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology* (2004), 45–74.

⁷ K.-E. Sjöquist – P. Åström, *Pylos: Palmprints & Palmleaves* (1985); J. Hruby in: G. Walberg, *Midea: The Megaron Complex and Shrine Area. Excavations on the Lower Terraces 1994–1997. Text* (2007), 481–482. Now see the new *Journal of Ancient Fingerprints*, vol. 1, 2007.

⁸ J. Betts in: C. Gallou (ed.), *Dioskouroi: Studies Presented to W. G. Cavanagh and C. B. Mee on the Anniversary of Their 30-year Joint Contribution to Aegean Archaeology* (2008) 97–136.



Fig. 1 a–b Two lentoids from the stomion of Mycenae ChT 515 (drawings slightly corrected): a) CMS I No. 144; b) CMS I No. 145.

ORGANIZING AEGEAN SEALS

Before the decade 1965–1975, there was no accepted chronology for seals. In the early twentieth century Georg Karo (1910)⁹ and Hagen Biesantz (1954)¹⁰ produced short lists of seals by context, but they could do little with them. Evans (1930) put seals in a simplified linear progression from crude to naturalistic.¹¹

The 1960s saw the first publications dedicated exclusively to Aegean seals, starting, of course, with the first volume of the CMS (1960). Four years later, Victor Kenna produced *Cretan Seals* (1964), a text that is difficult to comprehend; and his datings in subsequent CMS volumes seem arbitrary.¹² In 1966, Agnes Sakellariou published *Μυκηναϊκή σφραγιδογλυφία*; but its “three styles, A, B, C, are all contemporary, covering the whole of the Late Bronze Age”.¹³

John Betts’s attempt to organize Aegean seals was fuelled by the debate about the Final Destruction of Knossos. Since pottery alone was not deciding the issue, maybe seals

⁹ G. Karo, AM 35, 1910, 178–182, listed seals from the Mycenae Shaft Graves and the Chamber Tombs dug by Tsountas, the seals from the Vapheio tholos, Kalyvia cemetery, and seals and sealings from the sites of Knossos and Zakros.

¹⁰ Biesantz, KMS.

¹¹ Evans, PM IV, 484–619

¹² Kenna, CS. Kenna told me at the first CMS conference (1971) that he drew all seals to the same size (the size of a British sovereign), and that the seals belonging to the “best period” (LM II) had a distinctive taste.

¹³ J.H. Betts – J.G. Younger, Kadmos 21, 1982, 104–121, esp. 108 (citing A. Sakellariou, MS 104–111): “Sakellariou has distinguished a Minoan style (A), with flowing forms and freedom of movement, a Mycenaean style (B) with harsh modeling and sketchy details, and a third style (C) that appears both in Crete and on the Mainland with schematic and mechanical engraving”.

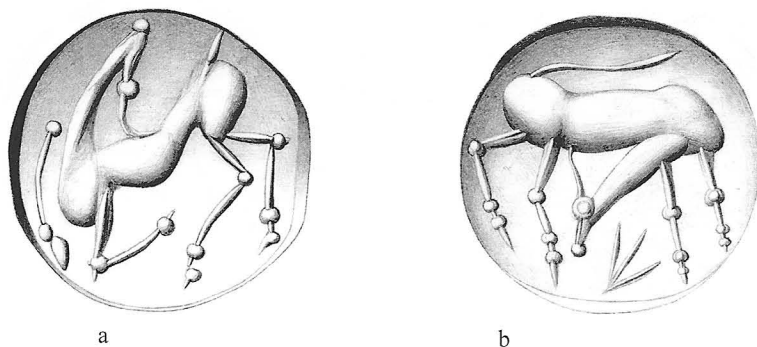


Fig. 2 a–b Two lentoids from the Temple at Ayia Irini in Kea: a) CMS V No. 499 of limestone; b) CMS V No. 500 of limestone.

could.¹⁴ In 1967 at the London Mycenaean Seminar, Betts presented a long list of seals from contexts in an effort to identify the latest sealings at Knossos.¹⁵

It was in this climate that I began my doctoral dissertation (1969–1973),¹⁶ starting with an even longer list of seals and sealings from dated Late Bronze Age contexts, and analyzing these from a variety of viewpoints (iconography, shape, size, material). But a continuous chronology again was not obvious. As I was preparing for my PhD defense at Cincinnati (Spring 1973), two of my fellow graduate students, Rob Guy and Donna Kurtz, urged me to group the seals stylistically and to date these groups according to the dated contexts. It took me only a few days to do this. My last chapter, ‘IV. Style’, outlined 23 stylistic groups. Chronologically the last was the ‘Group of the Elegant Twins from Kea’ (Fig. 2a–b), which, with the addition of the Phylakopi seals (Fig. 3 a–b), became the Island Sanctuaries Group.¹⁷

Other scholars were also getting into attribution: John Boardman (1970),¹⁸ Angela Tamvaki (1973),¹⁹ and John Betts again (1976).²⁰ Paul Yule (1980) grouped the early Cretan

¹⁴ V.E.G. Kenna, London Mycenaean Seminar, 17 May 1961, 239–242.

¹⁵ J. Betts, London Mycenaean Seminar, 1 November 1967, 341–342 (= BICS 15, 1968, 142).

¹⁶ J.G. Younger, *Towards the Chronology of Aegean Glyptic in the Late Bronze Age* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 1973), under the direction of J.L. Caskey, M. Wiencke, and M.R. Popham.

¹⁷ J.G. Younger in: CMS Beih. 1, 263–272.

¹⁸ Boardman, GGFR, 48, 393–396.

¹⁹ A. Tamvaki, AAA 6, 1973, 308–315.

²⁰ J.H. Betts, BICS 23, 1976, 122–123. While I was teaching high school in Athens (1973–1974 at the Campion School), I met John Betts for the first time at a party at the British School, and we talked well into the night, planning a collaboration on seal attribution.

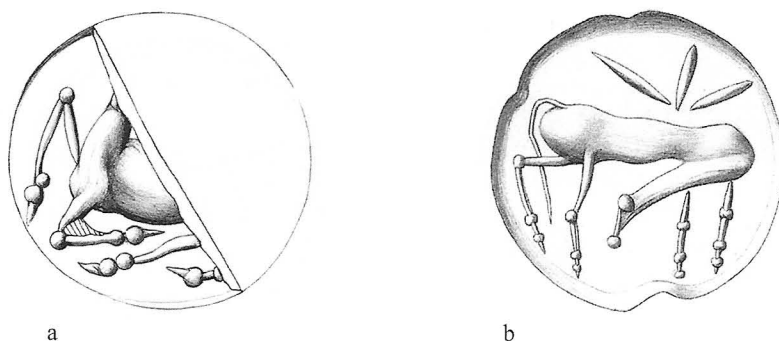


Fig. 3 a-b Two lentoids from the East Shrine of the Mycenaean Sanctuary at Phylakopi in Melos: a) CMS V Suppl. 1B No. 38 of fluorite; b) CMS V Suppl. 1B No. 40 of limestone.

seals.²¹ Betts and I started a series of articles in *Kadmos* (1982).²² And Weingarten discussed the ‘Zakro Master’ (1983).²³

For our project on sealstone attribution, Betts and I worked independently at first. In Durham, North Carolina, I put descriptions, photographs, and drawings on 5 x 7 inch cards, scattered these on the floor, organized them into groups, recorded those, refiled the cards, waited three months, and repeated the process. I did this for a couple of years, eventually arriving at a fairly consistent set of groupings. Betts visited me in 1978 and then again in 1981; I spent the Summer 1979 in Bristol – these times, we organized the seals together. By early 1981, we were coming to the same conclusions again and again. This became the *Kadmos* series.²⁴

At the end of each sorting session, with fewer than 50 seals left to attribute, I came to the conclusion that the two latest stylistic groups – Island Sanctuaries and its subset Rhodian Hunt, dated by contexts to IIIA2/IIIB – represented the last hard stone seals to be carved: no stylistically more advanced group developed out of these.²⁵

As for the Knossos problem, Popham had photographed all the sealings by 1988 and he gave me a set.²⁶ From earlier photographs and drawings, I had already thought that CMS II,8 No. 192 had certainly been impressed by a Rhodian Hunt ring – Popham’s photographs

²¹ P. Yule, ECS.

²² Betts – Younger (supra n. 13), continued by Younger alone, *Kadmos* 22–26. 28, 1983–1987. 1989.

²³ Weingarten, *Zakro Master*.

²⁴ The process is also summarized in J.G. Younger in: Laffineur – Crowley, *Ευκόν*, 339–347, esp. 340. The entire series is now online: <http://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/4374> to 4379, 4402 with a new, updated version of the Concordance, 5898 (originally J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 28, 1989, 101 ff.).

²⁵ See n. 17, above.

²⁶ These were eventually published in 1995: M.R. Popham and M. Gill, *The Latest Sealings from the Palace and Houses at Knossos*.

ATTRIBUTING AEGEAN SEALS: LOOKING BACK, GLANCING AHEAD

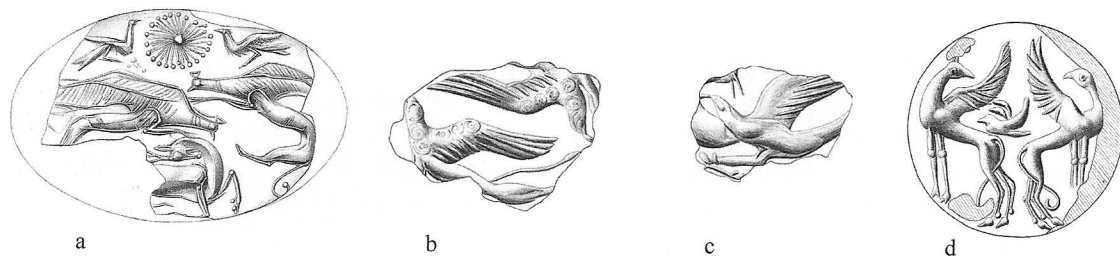


Fig. 4 a–d Sealings from Knossos probably impressed by members of the Rhodian Hunt group: a) CMS II,8 No. 192; b–d) CMS II,8 Nos. 186–188.

allowed the possibility that Rhodian Hunt seals might have impressed others (*Fig. 4 a–d*).²⁷ Thus, for me, the final destruction of Knossos occurred contemporaneously, ca. 1300 BCE in the conventional chronology.

STYLISTIC ATTRIBUTION

When people create a taxonomy, they tend to ‘lump’ or ‘split’ the individual components.²⁸ Whether designing cars, sorting fossils, or analyzing seals, people will either see the ‘trees’ or the ‘forest’. Lumpers place new fossil discoveries into broad groups; splitters see a separate species in each fossil skeleton. Some archaeologists will lump pots into groups to illustrate major social processes, others will split sherds into complex typologies. Both approaches are valuable and each has its own drawback: lumpers may work too quickly, splitters too slowly; lumpers may dismiss important details, splitters may become obsessed with them.

Betts and I, being lumpers, thought the process of attributing seals was simple; and we described our procedure clearly and several times; here is a summary from our introductory article to the *Kadmos* series:²⁹

“I. The small size of seals causes the details of motifs to be rendered in exaggerated conventions, like the drilled dots for eyes;

²⁷ E.g., CMS II,8 Nos. 186–188.

²⁸ The terms are coined by V.A. McKusick, *Perspectives in Biological Medicine* 12.2, 1969 Winter, 298–312. Good preliminary discussions occur online, e.g., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lumpers_and_splitters.

²⁹ Betts – Younger (*supra* n. 13) 114.

“II. these technical details as well as the general composition constitute ‘style’;

“III. seals showing figures in the same style can be grouped together;

“IV. since there are many ways of rendering features (e.g., an animal’s eye may be a large or small dot, sunken or raised, plain or within a circle, an ellipse, or a triangle), the occurrence of several comparable traits on a number of seals suggests the same artist or workshop.

“V. An artist or workshop, having been identified, must be dated through the *termini ante quos* of the seals, rings, and sealings found in dated contexts”.

John Cherry thought that was clear; at the Eikon conference (1992) he discussed the process of attributing Aegean vases to painters, tablets to scribes, and seals to sculptors, and he gave our work high marks.³⁰

Though Betts and I together wrote the Introduction to the *Kadmos* series, “Aegean Seals of the Late Bronze Age: Masters and Workshop”, the rest of the series I wrote alone. The reasons were simple: I wanted to get the results of our collaboration out as soon as possible (I was coming up for tenure at Duke University, 1981–1982); John was starting Bristol Classical Press and had little time for anything else.

The second and third installment of the series continued to identify individual artists, but the fourth installment changed terminology: “Aegean Seals of the Late Bronze Age: Stylistic Groups”.³¹ I explained the reasons for the change in terminology:

“most scholars are naturally skeptical about the possibility of discovering artists when the extant amount of their work is small” (citing the 40 vase-painters identified for fewer than 900 vases);

with only one extant seal identified as having certainly impressed an extant sealing,³² the conclusion must be that “the total number of seals produced must have been unimaginably high”;

and there are indeed some stylistic traits that are common in several media and constitute therefore part of a *Zeitstil*.³³

³⁰ J. Cherry in: Laffineur – Crowley, Εἰκόν 123–144, a detailed history of artist attribution in the Aegean Bronze Age. His appraisal, 135–136, includes the following: “Particularly impressive in this respect has been the work, individually and jointly, of John Betts and John Younger ... [their papers] remain among the few Bronze Age studies in which criteria for establishing an individual artist’s style are set out explicitly”. Cherry repeated his approval in: Betancourt et al., *Meletemata* 103–110, esp. 106.

³¹ J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 24, 1985, 34 ff.

³² CMS XI No. 27, said to be from Elis, impressed sealing CMS I Suppl. No. 180 from Pylos.

³³ Details that characterize the Mycenae-Vapheio Lion Group are also to be found on a number of objects from

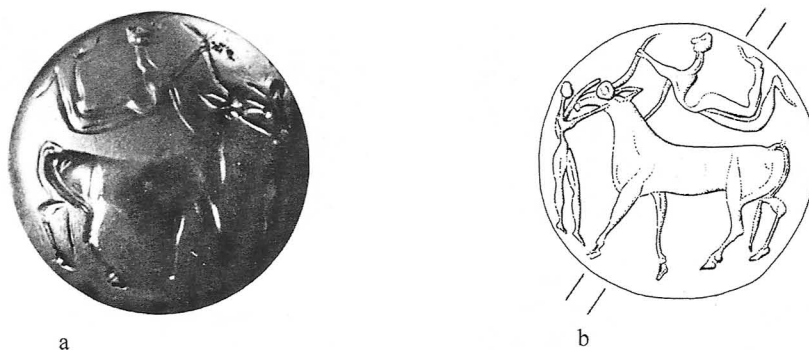


Fig. 5 a-b Lentoid of brown agate in the Museum of Art and Archaeology (inv. no. 57.8), University of Missouri at Columbia, said to have been found at Phigaleia.

Specifically, however, two events induced me to change ‘artists’ to ‘styles’.³⁴ In 1979 I was shown a lentoid in the Museum of Art and Archaeology of the University of Missouri at Columbia.³⁵ In this bull-leaping scene (*Fig. 5 a-b*), the bull’s dotted eye is large like those in the Dot-Eye group of the 15th century, but the head is triangular and pointed like Island Sanctuaries animals a century later. The weak (even flexible) legs of both bull and leapers also seem half-way between the thin but still sturdy legs of Dot-Eye bulls and the schematic legs of Island Sanctuaries animals. The Columbia seal should then be contemporary with the Spectacle Eye group but its more linear traits pointed to an abstraction that I did not see in the Spectacle Eye group. In fact the general trend in Late Bronze Age Aegean hardstone seals is a continuing simplification and smoothness of forms (*Fig. 6*). The early animals in the Mycenae-Vapheio and Almond-Eye groups have a rich musculature that becomes ever smoother through the Dot-Eye and Spectacle Eyes groups, finishing in the sleek, sausage-like bodies of Island Sanctuaries.

In grouping seals in and around ‘Columbia’ (*Fig. 7*), I could not see any pair of them sharing more or less identical traits; they all seemed to borrow traits from each other randomly. In short, I was faced with a classic splitter problem: I was bewildered by details. And I decided to acknowledge this.

the Shaft Graves at Mycenae (J.G. Younger, *TUAS* 6, 1981, 67–71; and id., *Kadmos* 23, 1984, 53–58), and technical traits that characterize a subset of that group also characterize the Lion Relief at Mycenae (J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 23, 1984, 62–64). The large, almond-shaped eyes on seals (J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 24, 1985, 53–62) are also copied on some ivories (e.g., a plaque from Archanes, Sakellarakis, Archanes 735–738 *Fig. 861*). One must be cautious, however, of attributing traits to a *Zeitstil*: the small crosses, like embroidery stitches, that decorate the bodies of deer in the frescoes from Orchomenos, Pylos, and Tiryns (all LH IIIB; S.A. Immerwahr, *Aegean Painting in the Bronze Age* (1990) Or No. 3, Py No. 11, and Ti No. 7) also appear centuries earlier on the deer hunted by lions on the niello dagger from Mycenae Shaft Grave IV (S. Marinatos – M. Hirmer, *Crete and Mycenae* (1960) Color Pl. XXXVI top).

³⁴ The original terminology reflected of course the specialties of my fellow graduate students.

³⁵ Inv. no. 57.8. J.G. Younger, *Muse* 17, 1983, 72–80; id., *Kadmos* 26, 1987, 58–60.

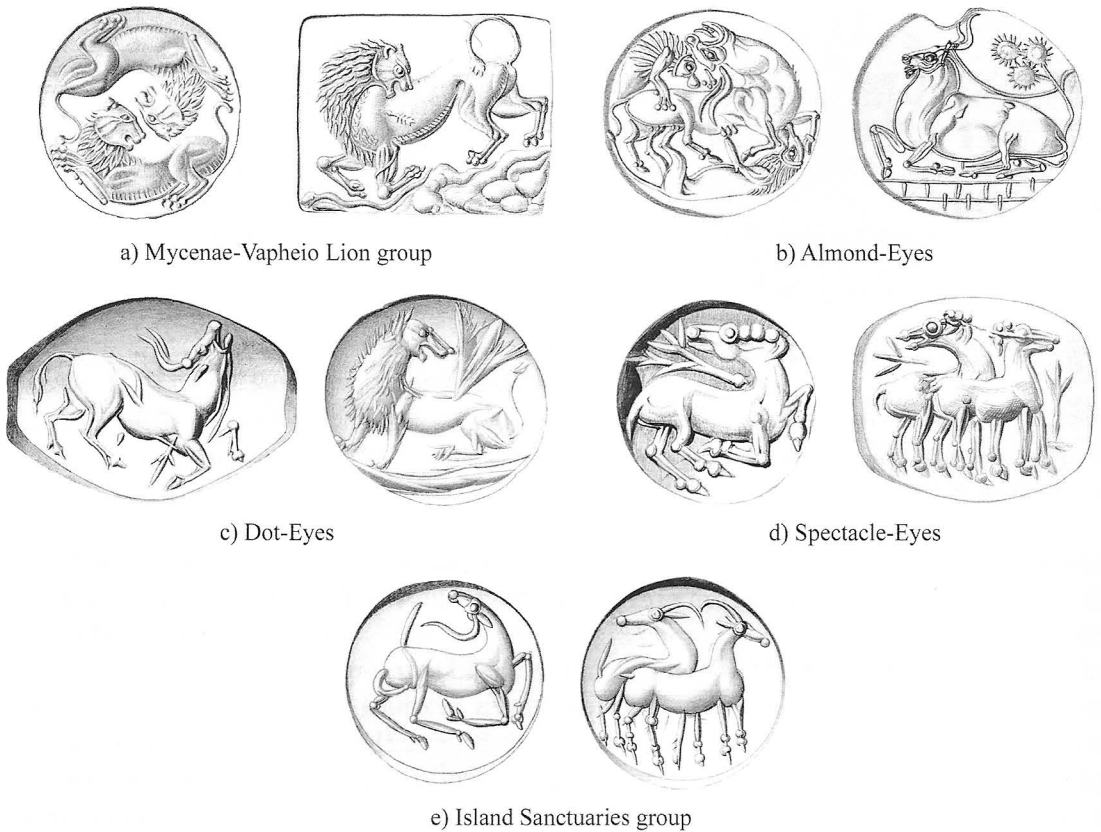


Fig. 6 a–e A chart of the five major stylistic groups of hardstone seals in the Aegean Late Bronze Age arranged chronologically: a) Mycenaean-Vapheio Lion group (CMS I Nos. 250. 10); b) Almond-Eyes (CMS XII Nos. 251. 249); c) Dot-Eyes (CMS V Nos. 645. 498); d) Spectacle-Eyes (CMS II,4 No. 122; CMS VII No. 98); e) Island Sanctuaries group (CMS IX No. 191. CMS V No. 221).

The second event came in early July 1984, when Betts and I were invited to a meeting with Ingo Pini and his assistant Helmut Jung in the old CMS offices in Marburg;³⁶ to convince us that technical traits differed dramatically from one seal to another they showed us huge blown-up photographs of details – animal parts, eyes, and hooves inches across. I was suspicious of these photos; anything blown up that large will reveal interesting details but will also look unrecognizable.

I was not then, and I am not now, convinced that it is impossible to identify individual artists – nor was Betts. But I was beginning to see that identifying ‘style groups’ might be more expedient than identifying ‘artists’, especially if scholarly agreement was going to

³⁶ J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 24, 1985, 48–50.

ATTRIBUTING AEGEAN SEALS: LOOKING BACK, GLANCING AHEAD

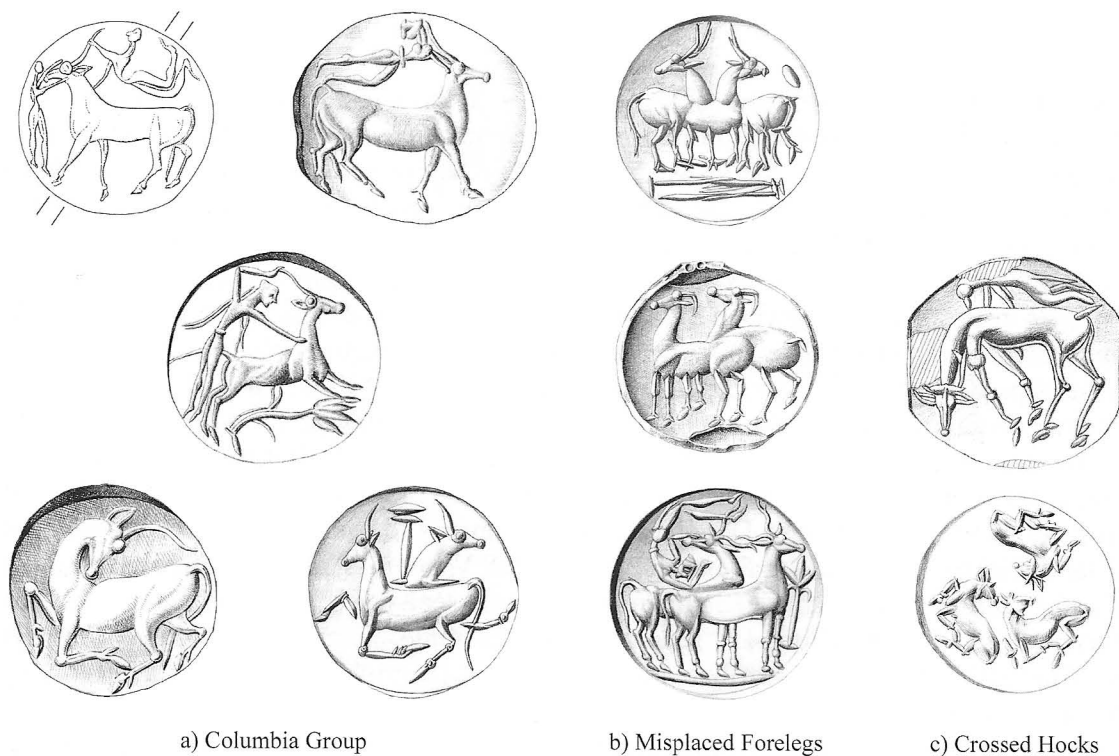


Fig. 7 a–c Seals in and near the Columbia group. a) The Columbia group (Univ. Missouri-Columbia Inv. no. 57.8; CMS I Nos. 79. 82; CMS I No. 121; CMS XI No. 58); b) Misplaced Forelegs (CMS XI No. 57; CMS I No. 262; CMS V No. 597); c) Crossed Hocks (CMS XI No. 46; CMS VII No. 112).

be difficult to achieve, and more especially if a looser terminology might help me out of the Columbia quandary. Again, in the fourth *Kadmos* article, concluding paragraph: “In short, a nomenclature using ‘group’ and ‘subgroup,’ will permit scholars more flexibility to perceive the various stylistic relationships, and to refine those relationships”. In other words, I was going to group seals and call them what they are – a group of seals.

With the terminology changed in ‘Aegean Seals IV’, I finished the rest of the *Kadmos* series, plugged the gap between it and Yule ECS,³⁷ and moved on to other research areas.

³⁷ Younger, Middle Phase.

RECEPTION

When I stepped back from the field of glyptics, I awaited a critical reception to our attribution studies ('critical' in both senses: condemning and analytical). But there has been disappointingly little. Over the 20 years since the *Kadmos* series ended, there have been few stylistic studies of seals – and nobody has challenged the basic scheme. Weingarten and I have lowered the dates of the Lion-Spiral Complex and Border-Leaf Group – but not by much.³⁸ Aurelia Dickers discussed the Mainland Popular group in great detail and fine-tuned its internal chronology.³⁹ At our last conference, I revisited the Spectacle Eyes group and confirmed the original date;⁴⁰ and Walter Müller redefined the technique which created those 'Spectacle Eyes'.⁴¹ More generally, Pini and Müller (1995, 2000) have examined whether certain themes are chronologically discreet – some are.

Recently attribution has made a come-back. Joseph and Maria Shaw have attributed one of their seals from Kommos to 'Marine Schools'.⁴² (2004). David Romano sees his Mt Lykaion seal belonging to Dot-Eyes (pers. comm.). And even the most recent volumes of the CMS have begun to make attributions: CMS V Suppl. 3 attributes five seals to the Island Sanctuaries group;⁴³ CMS II,6 states that one sealtype (No. 73) is "Von derselben Hand" as two others (Nos. 117, 132: probably the same prism, actually); and CMS III, the Giamalakis Collection, attributes one seal (No. 476) to "dem Umfeld der 'Mainland Popular Group'".

Attribution to stylistic groups has given us a solid chronology for seals in the Aegean Bronze Age. And this has allowed us to understand subtleties in the history of Minoan and Mycenaean administrations. The Malia Workshop marks the integration of writing into the administration;⁴⁴ the Mycenae-Vapheio group marked the influence of Knossos into the Peloponnese;⁴⁵ the Almond- and Dot-eye groups probably marked Knossos' supremacy,⁴⁶ against which Zakros resisted;⁴⁷ the Spectacle Eye group marks the Mycenaean administration at Knossos;⁴⁸ and the dispersal of the Island Sanctuaries group accompanied the Mycenaean withdrawal from Knossos.⁴⁹

³⁸ J.G. Younger, GGA 240, 1988, 188–224, a review-article of Yule, ECS. Weingarten in: C.F. Macdonald – C. Knappett, Knossos: Protopalatial Deposits in Early Magazine A and the South-West Houses (2007) 135–136.

³⁹ Dickers, Spätmykenische Siegel.

⁴⁰ J.G. Younger in: CMS Beih. 5, 347–360.

⁴¹ W. Müller in: CMS Beih. 6, 181–194, esp. 186–188.

⁴² J 18 from House X, room X1, J.G. Younger in: J. Shaw–M. Shaw (eds.), Kommos forthcoming.

⁴³ CMS V Suppl. 3 Nos. 10. 96. 239. 378. 481.

⁴⁴ CMS II,2 pp. 109 ff., Nos. 86–198.

⁴⁵ J.G. Younger, Kadmos 23, 1984, 38 ff.

⁴⁶ id., Kadmos 24, 1985, 34 ff.

⁴⁷ CMS II,7. J. Weingarten, Kadmos 22, 1983, 8–13; Weingarten, Zakro Master; ead. in: Darcque – Poursat, L'Iconographie minoenne 167–179.

⁴⁸ See n. 39, above.

⁴⁹ See n. 17, above; J.G. Younger, Kadmos 26, 1987, 45ff.

CONCLUSION: THREE QUESTIONS

The attribution of gold rings, especially those found recently, has been neglected. Some of them belong to already identified groups (for instance, the Poros, Syme, and Kalapodi rings should belong to the group of the Isopata Ring).⁵⁰ Others seem exotic, like CMS V Suppl. 1B No. 115 from Aidonia Tb 7 (I know of no parallel for the shape of the women's dresses). Here's my first question: Were any rings made after the Mycenaean take-over of Knossos? Answer: possibly, but very few. To me, the latest ring may be CMS V Suppl. 1B No. 137 from the Anthia Tholos (Olympia), LH (I), II, (IIIA) context; its nervous style and cluttered composition seems late (cf. the later Rhodian Hunt group)⁵¹ and the iconography (two people in a dual chariot drawn by griffins) has a few, late parallels, notably on the Ayia Triada Sarcophagus, east end (LM IIIA1).⁵²

Second question (more problematic): were any seals ever made on the Greek mainland in the Late Bronze Age?⁵³ Ingo Pini reasonably hypothesized that in ten years a talented Mainland artist could have learned to make seals from a Minoan master.⁵⁴ But the only pertinent evidence is the steatite ring mould, CMS V No. 422, and it comes from a tomb (Eleusis T. Ηπ 3, LH II–III context), not a workshop. Tsountas identified a stone workshop in the House of the Columns at Mycenae, in which there were found some worked fragments of dark brown agate and to which he attributed CMS 1 Suppl. No. 12 – but it is a worn Mainland Popular lentoid of steatite and bears no relation to the worked agate pieces found in the presumed workshop.⁵⁵ The Thebes New Palace workshop (LH IIIB) produced many unfinished inlays and beads in a variety of materials, including dark brown agate and lapis lazuli, plus four seals, CMS V Nos. 672–674. Two of these, 672 and 674, were probably recut from beads but not in the workshop – their styles are not contemporary: 672, with its dot-eye griffin and paws ending in simple dots, looks early Neopalatial;⁵⁶ 673

⁵⁰ Poros (N. Dimopoulou – G. Rethemiotakis in: CMS Beih. 6, 39 ff.); Syme (A. Lebessi – P. Muhly – G. Papasavvas, AM 119, 2004, 1–31); Kalapodi (CMS V Suppl. 3 No. 68); group of the Isopata Ring (J.G. Younger, Kadmos 22, 1983, 134). CMS V Suppl. 1B No. 321, a ring impression from Mikro Vouni in Samothrace, should be in the group of the Eleusis Matrix (J.G. Younger, Kadmos 22, 1983, 128).

⁵¹ J.G. Younger, Kadmos 26, 1987, 63–64; cf. esp. CMS VII No. 177.

⁵² C. Long, The Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus. A Study of Late Minoan and Mycenaean Funerary Practices and Beliefs (1974) 29–34 Pls. 7. 11. There are two other parallels: CMS II,3 No. 199, a Spectacle Eye cylinder said to be from Astraki, Crete, and a Pictorial krater from Enkomi Tb 48 (LH IIIB; V. Karageorghis – E.T. Vermeule, Mycenaean Pictorial Vase-Painting (1982) No. V.27). For chariots and their limited use in Late Bronze Age Greece, see J.H. Crouwel, Chariots and Other Means of Land Transport in Bronze Age Greece (1981).

⁵³ I omit the Mainland Popular group and relatives (J.G. Younger, Kamos 26, 1987, 61–73), since those 'seals' did not function sphragistically – the one exception, CMS V Suppl. 3 No. 373, only tests the rule (*regulam probat*); the piece of cloth that impressed the MM II Phaistos sealing CMS II,5 No. 327, was also not a seal, *sensu stricto*.

⁵⁴ I. Pini in: Bradfer-Burdet et al., Κρής Τεχνίτης 199–208.

⁵⁵ C. Tsountas, AEphem 1897, 121, fn. 1.

⁵⁶ Younger, Middle Phase 171: Couchant Agrimia II.

belongs in the LB 2 Muzzle group;⁵⁷ and 674–675 belong in LM IIIA:1 Spectacle Eyes.⁵⁸ In fact, since three of the four are of a similar banded agate, it is more likely that they were present in the workshop because they were collected for their material. In the Kadmos series, I hypothesized, based on provenance, several Mycenaean groups, but provenance is a dubious reason since seals traveled. The Mycenae-Vapheio group is so complex, and has so few members found in Crete, that it may represent the only plausible Mycenaean workshop – especially if the Lion Gate relief was influenced by it.⁵⁹

And the third question: Does identifying sealstone makers (as opposed to ‘stylistic groups’) contribute much to our understanding of Minoan-Mycenaean society? Identifying hands might, in fact, actually obscure our analysis of seal use, their social and administrative functions – these should constitute the main focus of archaeological study.⁶⁰ John Cherry warns us against the ‘cult of attribution’, that lust for identifying ‘Masters’, of concentrating on the moment of production (and place in a history of aesthetics) rather than on social meaning: “There is nothing one could say about the pot-makers that could not be said about the pots themselves”.⁶¹ Substitute ‘seals’ for ‘pots’, and he is right.

⁵⁷ J.G. Younger, *Kadmos* 24, 1985, 60.

⁵⁸ *Id.*, *Kadmos* 25, 1986, 134–136.

⁵⁹ *Id.*, *Kadmos* 23, 1984, 62–64; J.G. Younger in: E. Thomas (ed.), *Forschungen zur griechischen Vorgeschichte: Das Ende der mykenischen Welt, Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums 7–8 July 1984* (1987) 63–72, esp. 63–64.

⁶⁰ B.S. Ridgway, *AJA* 98, 1994, 759–772, notes (761) how identifying artist-masters tends to make their work more praise-worthy and thus skews our evaluation of the work itself—we should, instead, focus on an artwork’s function and technique.

⁶¹ Cherry (*supra* n. 30) 129.