

STUDI DI ARCHEOLOGIA CRETESE

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CENTRO DI ARCHEOLOGIA CRETESE - UNIVERSITÀ DI CATANIA

STUDI DI ARCHEOLOGIA CRETESE

XII

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KALOCHORAFITIS
TWO CHAMBER TOMBS FROM
THE LM IIIA 2-B CEMETERY

A CONTRIBUTION
TO POSTPALATIAL FUNERARY PRACTICE
IN THE MESARA

with contributions by

Maria ANASTASIADOU, Irini ANTONAKAKI, Argyro NAFPLIOTI and Eleni NODAROU



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CHAPTER 9

The Seals⁸³⁰

9.1 The Seals from Kalochorafitis Tomb B

Five seals were found in the excavation of Tomb B in 1973 (**B-Cat. nos. 75-79**) (*Pl. XI*):

B-Cat. n. 75. HMS 2537 (close to Larnax 1) (*fig. 9.1a*): Lentoid cut in dark olive green serpentine with lighter and red-brown patches. The dimensions of the seal are: 1.53 × 1.49 cm (string-hole); thickness: 0.55 cm; string-hole: 0.35-0.30 cm. The motif is cut with a file. The seal is strongly abraded, with its edges rounded and parts of the motif (the sixth arm and the central part of the motif?) totally worn away. The string-hole and, as a result of this also part of the seal face at the edges of the hole, is abraded from the friction of the string. The piece has been glued together (modern) from separate fragments and as a result of this some cracks can be seen on the seal face and the back of the seal.

Engraved on the seal face is a radial motif with six arms. Between two (and originally all?) arms there is a short line. Each of the arms of the motif is created by the combination of two or three lines which are placed parallel to or at an angle to each other. It is possible that the motif initially resembled a star and that all its arms were conical⁸³¹. The arms would probably not have met at the centre of the seal face since they are placed rather irregularly in relation to each other⁸³².

Soft-stone seals with radiating motifs are well known from the existing seal corpus. Lentoids with four-armed star-shaped motifs have been excavated in the LM III cemetery of Armenoi and one has also been recently recovered from a context containing mostly LM

⁸²⁹ In the excavation diary the spindle whorl n. 14 is said to come from Larnax 2.

⁸³⁰ Maria Anastasiadou, Postdoctoral Researcher FSR 2012, Université Catholique de Louvain. I would like to thank Alexandra Karetso and Luca Girella for inviting me to contribute to this volume with the publication of the seals from the tomb. I am also grateful to the director of the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion Giorgos Rethemiotakis for granting me permission to study the material and Alexandra Karetso for her help during the study of the material in the Heraklion Museum. I am also thankful to Eleytheria Paliou for her help with the maps in Figs. 9.10 and 9.11 and to Colin Macdonald for correcting my English. This paper would not have been realised without the support of Jan Driessen and Florence

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⁸³¹ Star: e.g. CMS III no. 514 ('Mesara'); Band-shaped: e.g. CMS II,3 no. 187 ('Knossos'); V Suppl. 1B no. 204 (Armenoi).

⁸³² Arms meeting at the centre of the seal face: e.g. CMS II,3 no. 188 ('Knossos, Agios Giannis'); Arms

III material at Sissi⁸³³. However, motifs with five or six arms are rarer and have not been recovered from dated contexts (*fig. 9.1b*)⁸³⁴. The seal from Kalochorafitis is therefore the first lentoid with such a motif to have come from a proper context.

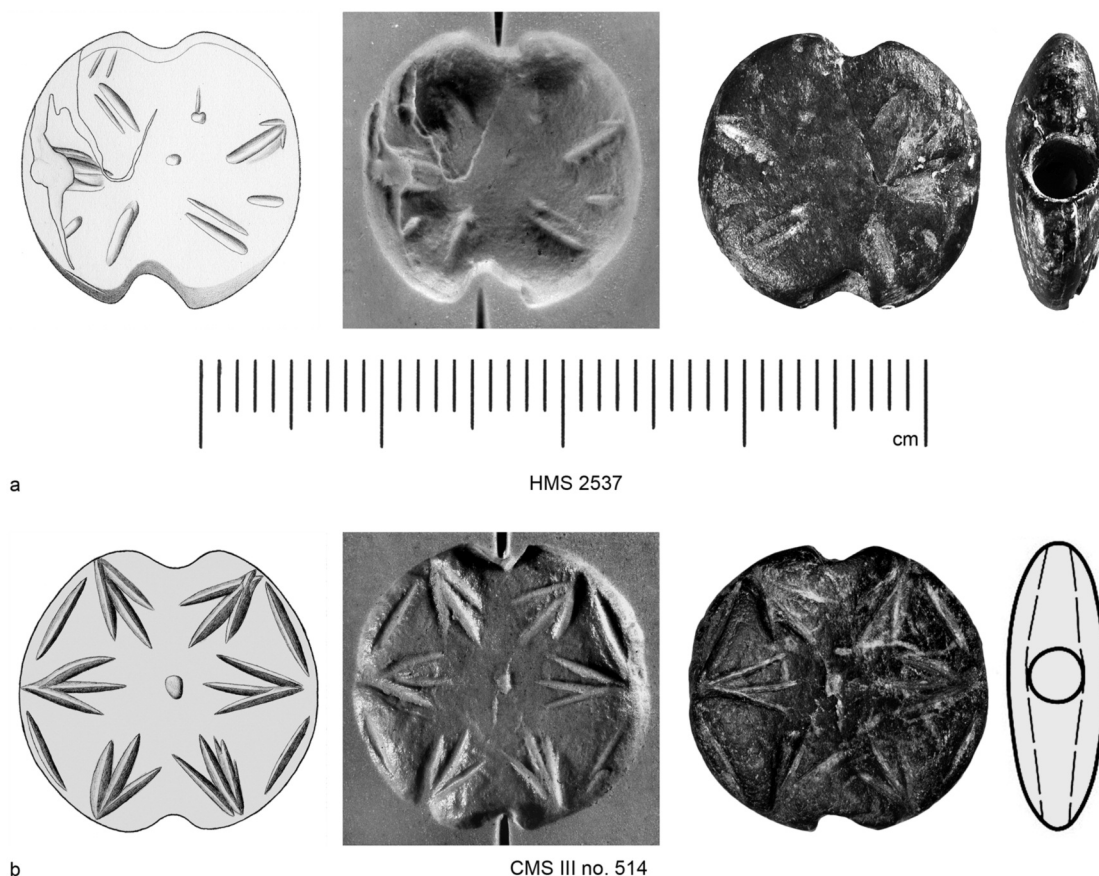


FIGURE 9.1. A. THE SEAL FROM KALOCHORAFITIS, B-CAT. N. 75 (HMS 2537); B. A SIX-ARMED STAR-SHAPED MOTIF ON A SOFT STONE LENTOID REPORTED TO COME FROM THE MESARA.

Due to the lack of good parallels from excavated contexts, the Kalochorafitis seal cannot be dated with certainty. Similar pieces are often dated to LM I on account of the partial resemblance of their technique to the technique used for the architectural seals; and also the fact that star-motifs are occasionally encountered on late Protopalatial/early Neopalatial hard-stone seals⁸³⁵. However, since the Kalochorafitis piece comes from a LM III context, it is possible that it was manufactured in that period. This would mean that other soft-stone seals with similar motifs and shape could also have been later products. More finds from dated contexts are required to be able to provide a more definitive answer to this issue.

not meeting: e.g. DIMOPOULOU 2000, 36 no. 31 (Poros-Katsambas); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 204 (Armenoi).

⁸³³ Armenoi: e.g. CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 204, 270, 282; Sissi: ANASTASIADOU 2012, p. 113, fig. 4.58.

⁸³⁴ Some examples are CMS III no. 514 ('Mesara');

CMS VIII no. 142; CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 389 (Knossos); DIMOPOULOU 2000, p. 36 no. 31 (Poros-Katsambas).

⁸³⁵ The CMS for example dates most soft-stone lentoids with radial motifs to LM I (CMS Databases in ARACHNE). For some examples of neopalatial hard-

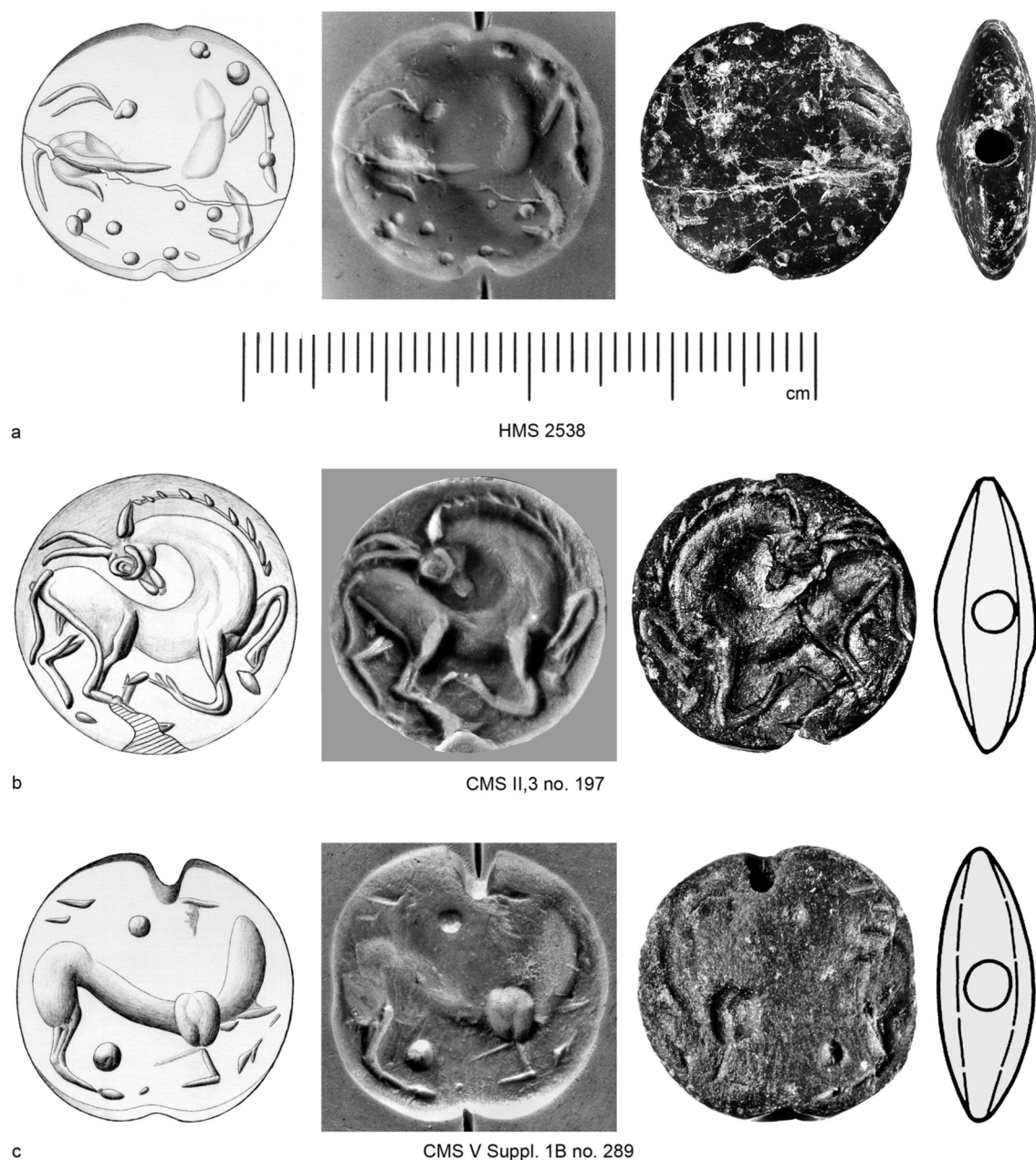


FIGURE 9.2 — A. THE SEAL FROM KALOCHORAFITIS, B-CAT. n. 76 (HMS 2538); B. A BOVID IN RIGHT PROFILE ON A LM III SOFT STONE LENTOID REPORTED TO COME FROM VATHIA PEDIADOS; C. AN ANIMAL IN RIGHT PROFILE ON A LM III SOFT STONE LENTOID FROM ARMENOI.

B-Cat. n. 76. HMS 2538 (not associated with a specific larnax) (*fig. 9.2a*): Lentoid cut in wine red soft stone (serpentine?) with some whitish inclusions. The dimensions of the seal are: 1.89×1.77 cm (string-hole); thickness: 0.70 cm; string-hole: 0.30 cm. The back of the seal has a conical shape with a flat top (truncated cone). The seal is engraved with hand tools. The piece is very abraded, its rounded edges and the worn intaglio suggest intensive use before deposition. The upper part of the neck, the muzzle, part of the waist, and large parts of the legs of the animal(s) engraved on the seal face have been worn away. The string-hole is abraded from the friction of the string. A fine fissure from gluing two pieces together to make one runs horizontally to the seal face on its lower half. The string-hole runs vertically to the engraved image.

There are two possible ways of reading the image on the seal face. Either, there is a depiction of a horned quadruped in right profile with head turned back and down (?) in a walking/galloping pose⁸³⁶. The animal has a large eye and long neck. The two dots in front of and above the neck of the animal would in this case be read as fillers. However, a second reading is possible where two quadrupeds can be seen, one in the foreground in right profile, looking in front, and one in the background with head looking in the opposite direction and down. In this case, the two dots above and in front of the neck would represent respectively the eye and the muzzle of the quadruped in the foreground⁸³⁷. The neck of the second quadruped, to which the head with the horns would belong, would be totally worn away. In both interpretations, the dot in the angle of the second front leg constitutes a filler (the remaining dots under the body of the quadruped represent the joints of the legs which are largely worn away).

The first interpretation seems more plausible since it finds a good iconographic parallel in an animal engraved on a lentoid reported to come from Vathia Pediados (*fig. 9.2b*)⁸³⁸. For this reason, the discussion will pertain to this reading of the image. The eye of the animal is created by a smaller dot drilled in a larger one (dot on dot). The horns are long but their curvature outwards as opposed to inwards, as one would expect if an agrimi was depicted, is peculiar. The horns of bovids or those of a goat can often curve outwards but in these cases, they end with a curvature inwards (S-shape)⁸³⁹. However, a few cases of horned quadrupeds with horns only curving outwards suggest that the animal is either a bovid or a wild goat⁸⁴⁰. Despite its slender and lean proportions, the long tail would suggest a bovid. The similarity of the horns with those of the animal of the bull-leaping scene depicted on long side A of larnax 7 (HM 20590) would support this reading⁸⁴¹.

Dotted joints and feet are characteristic of LB II-III hard-stone seals and would have been taken over in soft-stone glyptic from there⁸⁴². Prominent eyes which occupy the largest part of the head, often created by a smaller dot drilled on a larger dot, are also characteristic of hard-stone seals of the same period⁸⁴³. A long stretched neck, although not as long as the one on the Kalochorafitis seal, is often encountered on animal studies of LM III⁸⁴⁴. The field marks are a further feature encountered in LM III as is the *horror vacui* not seen on earlier soft-stone seals⁸⁴⁵. The best parallels for the piece are also encountered on two LM III seals, one of which comes from Armenoi (*fig. 9.2c*)⁸⁴⁶. Despite the fact that the three pieces are not stylistically identical, they are comparable because the animals have elongated and rather lean bodies⁸⁴⁷. A good stylistic parallel to the piece is also found on a chlorite lentoid which

stone seals displaying star-shaped motifs, see CMS VIII no. 42; CMS IX no. 43.

⁸³⁶For a quadruped in the same pose, compare CMS II,3 no. 197 ('Vathia Pediados').

⁸³⁷For a somewhat similar composition, see CMS III no. 479.

⁸³⁸CMS II,3 no. 197.

⁸³⁹E.g. CMS II,4 no. 154 (Episkopi).

⁸⁴⁰For similar horns on soft-stone lentoids, see CMS II,3 nos. 197 ('Vathia Pediados'), 336; CMS II,4 no. 141 (Knossos).

⁸⁴¹KARETSOU this volume.

⁸⁴²Animals with dotted joints on LB III seals: E.g. CMS II,3 nos. 123 (Tylissos), 225 (Dictaeon cave); CMS III no. 479; CMS V no. 649 ('Patsos'); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 251 (Armenoi). For this subject, see also KRZYSZKOWSKA 2005, pp. 203-204, 212.

⁸⁴³E.g. the eyes of the figures on the hard stone CMS II,3 no. 193 ('Poros'). For prominent eyes occupying the largest part of the head on soft-stone seals, see also CMS V no. 281 (Armenoi); V Suppl. 1B no. 296 (Armenoi). For this subject, see also KRZYSZKOWSKA 2005, pp. 203-204, 212.

⁸⁴⁴MÜLLER 1995, p. 160. For some examples of LM III animals with long stretched neck, see CMS II,4 no. 87; CMS IV no. 284 ('Lastros'); CMS V no. 282 (Armenoi).

⁸⁴⁵For examples of LM III soft-stone seals with field marks, see for example CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 231 (Armenoi); 289 (Armenoi); CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 149 ('Moni Odigitria'). For the *horror vacui* in LM III, see KRZYSZKOWSKA 2005, p. 210.

⁸⁴⁶CMS II,4 no. 87; CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 289 (Armenoi).

shows a quadruped with elongated body and long stick-like legs, dated on stylistic grounds to LM IIIA⁸⁴⁸. A combination of the above evidence suggests a dating of the Kalochorafitis seal to LM III and therefore one which makes it broadly contemporary with its context.

B-Cat. n. 77. HMS 2539 (close to Larnax 1) (*fig. 9.3a*): Lentoid cut in black steatite with some dark brown patches. The dimensions of the seal are: 1.50×1.36 cm (string-

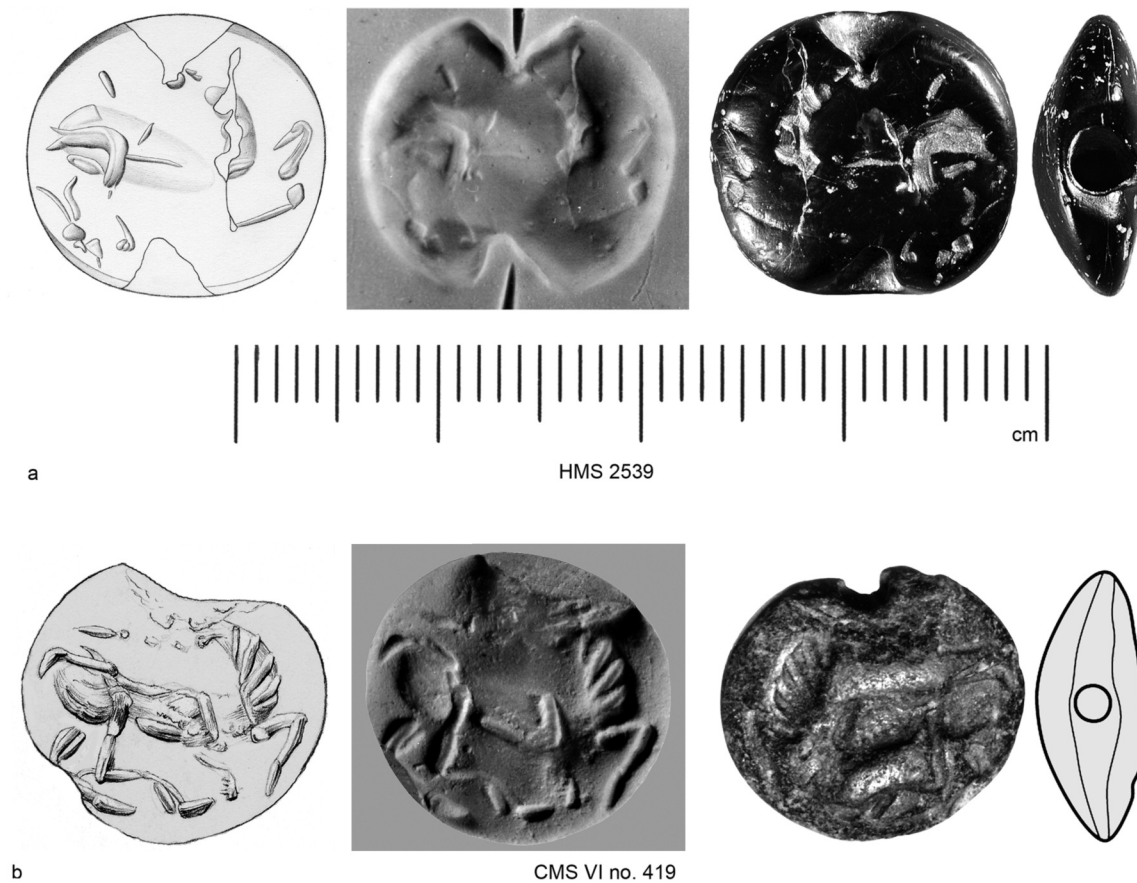


FIGURE 9.3. A. THE SEAL FROM KALOCHORAFITIS, B-CAT. N. 77 (HMS 2539); B. A BOVID IN RIGHT PROFILE WITH STRIATED NECK ON A LM III SOFT STONE LENTOID SEAL.

hole); thickness: 0.59 cm; string-hole: 0.33-0.38 cm. The seal face is slightly convex, the back of the seal more so. The seal is engraved with hand tools but the engraving is shallow. Its surface is very abraded, the edges of the seal are rounded and parts of the intaglio worn away (part of the legs, the body, and the head of the animal). Many scratches can be seen on the back side of the seal. The string-hole ends broaden and are strongly abraded on the side of the seal face which takes the shape of an eight. A fissure runs vertically to the seal face on its left part. The string-hole runs vertically to the engraved image.

⁸⁴⁷Regarding the stylistic differences of the three pieces, the Armenoi piece for example has short legs, no dotted joints, and a squatter torso than the other two animals. CMS II,4 no. 87 has longer legs but only a few

highlighted joints. These are, however, not rendered by a dot as is the case with the Kalochorafitis seal, but by a cut. Moreover, the body of the animal is formed in a more uniform way than that of the other two creatures

A quadruped with striated neck in right profile and head turned to the back is depicted on the seal face (?)⁸⁴⁹. The animal had a long tail which was either pointing downwards and ended in a bundle immediately behind the back leg, or upwards and curved to the front—then the short line above the rump of the animal would represent the tip of the tail. The front legs of the animal are placed in a peculiar configuration as one is bent upwards and the other downwards such that the hooves or paws are situated the one opposite the other. Despite the fact that horns are not represented (or preserved), the galloping (?) pose of the animal, the striated neck, and the long tail would suggest a bovid⁸⁵⁰.

Bovids in a galloping pose with head turned backwards and with striated neck are common in LM III glyptic (*fig. 9.3 b*)⁸⁵¹. The long stretched neck of the animal brings it close to the animal depicted on HMS 2538. The pose and especially the configuration of the body and head of these two animals also display some similarities. The engraving of the line of the back leg deep into the rump could perhaps be connected with the tendency towards rendering animals graphically in LM III⁸⁵². All the above considerations suggest a dating of the piece to LM III.

B-Cat. n. 78. HMS 2540 (within Larnax 6) (*fig. 9.4 a*): Lentoid cut in black serpentine with a rough surface. The dimensions of the seal are: 2.10×2.10 cm (string-hole); thickness: 0.89 cm; string-hole: 0.33 cm. The back of the seal is conical with rounded top. The seal is engraved with hand tools, is fresh from the workshop, and has sharp edges. The string-hole runs vertically to the engraved image.

On the seal face are engraved two standing *agrimia* in different poses. One animal is standing in the foreground and partly covering the body of the other animal which is in the background. Above the rump of the animal which is depicted in left profile, there is a plant motif with stem and four leaves/branches turned 90° clockwise to the animals. The animals have open mouths and large ‘spectacle eyes’ (created by the application of a tubular drill which cuts a circle around the engraving in the area of the eye)⁸⁵³. The intaglio is medium deep and the bodies of the animals are formed by the combination of broad rounded planes.

Standing *agrimia* with large eyes and open mouths are typical of LM III (*fig. 9.4 b*)⁸⁵⁴. The depictions are encountered both in soft- and hard-stone seals and the animals can stand alone or be combined in pairs⁸⁵⁵. Plant motifs in the shape of branches are common in such compositions. When in pairs, the *agrimia* in soft-stone glyptic have hitherto always been depicted in the same profile. The Kalochorafitis seal, whose best parallels are encountered on hard-stone seals, is the first soft-stone seal with the composition of two standing *agrimia* shown in different profiles (*fig. 9.4 c*)⁸⁵⁶. Soft-stone seals with standing *agrimia* have also been recovered in the LM III cemetery of Armenoi⁸⁵⁷.

and displays a soft intaglio with no interior anomalies.

⁸⁴⁸CMS III no. 478.

⁸⁴⁹If the head is turned to the back, the dot evident on the edge of the upper string-hole would represent the head and the muzzle would be worn away.

⁸⁵⁰Bovids are often rendered in galloping poses (e.g. CMS II,4 no. 87; CMS III no. 431) as opposed to lions which are most often depicted standing or lying (e.g. CMS II,4 no. 74; CMS V no. 242). For an example of a LM III bovid without horns, see CMS VI no. 414.

⁸⁵¹MÜLLER 1995, pp. 158-160 with *fig. 7 a-e*.

⁸⁵²MÜLLER 1995, p. 166.

⁸⁵³For the term ‘spectacle eyes’, see YOUNGER 1986, 121.

⁸⁵⁴For this topic, see MÜLLER 1995, pp. 165-167 with *figs. 12-14*. For an example of a hard-stone seal with a similar *agrimi*, see CMS II,3 no. 111 (Kalyvia).

⁸⁵⁵For some soft-stone examples in which the animals are encountered in pairs, see CMS II,4 no. 197 (‘Avdou’); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 229 (Armenoi). For a hard-stone example, see CMS V no. 185.

⁸⁵⁶For some hard-stone seals with a similar composition, see CMS V nos. 185, 188 (Salamis); CMS IX no. 196.

B-Cat. n. 79. HMS 2541 (Larnax 1 or 2) (*fig. 9.5a*): Lentoid cut in greenish grey serpentine. The dimensions of the seal are: 1.99 (string-hole)×1.91 cm; thickness: 0.67 cm; string-hole: 0.29 cm. Part of the intaglio is worn away from abrasion such that the largest part of the waist of the animal and the head is missing. One string-hole has sharp edges but the other is strongly abraded on the side of the seal face. The string-hole runs vertically to the engraved image.

A standing lion in right profile is engraved on the seal face. The neck and head of the animal which is worn away are sunk to the ground and together with the front legs including the



FIGURE 9.4 — A. THE SEAL FROM KALOCHORAFITIS, B-Cat. n. 78 (HMS 2540); B. A PAIR OF STANDING *AGRIMIA* IN RIGHT PROFILE ON A LM III SOFT STONE LENTOID REPORTED TO COME FROM AVDOU; C. A PAIR OF STANDING *AGRIMIA* IN OPPOSITE PROFILES ON A HARD STONE LM III LENTOID FROM SALAMINA.



FIGURE 9.5 — A. THE SEAL FROM KALOCHORAFITIS, B-CAT. N. 79 (HMS 2541); B. A LION IN RIGHT PROFILE WITH FOREPART TURNED BACK ON A LM III SOFT STONE SEAL; C. A BOVID IN LEFT PROFILE IN AN UNNATURAL POSE ON A SOFT STONE LM III SEAL FROM ARMENOI.

paws are turned back. The legs resemble hooves rather than paws but the broad neck with the explicit rendering of a mane suggests a lion. Ribs are depicted on the waist of the animal.

The best iconographic parallel for the lion on the Kalochorafitis seal is on a soft-stone lentoid of unknown provenance kept in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris (*fig. 9.5b*)⁸⁵⁸. The

⁸⁵⁷E.g. CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 207, 229, 231, 238, 245.

piece displays a lion in the same pose as that on the Kalochorafitis seal which shows the characteristic dotted eyes and nostrils of LM III animals. Two lentoids from the LM III cemetery of Armenoi display an *agrimi* and a bovid (?) respectively in somewhat similar but particularly unnatural poses. The poses and the lean body of the bovid (?) help date the pieces to LM III (*fig. 9.5c*)⁸⁵⁹. The Kalochorafitis seal should be dated to the same period on account of its similarities to these three pieces.

9.2 Some Notes on the Seals from Kalochorafitis

Dating

B-Cat. n. 75 could be dated either to LM I or to LM III. The remaining four seals from Kalochorafitis are dated to LM III and are thus broadly contemporaneous with their contexts. These pieces are dated to LM III in general because no specific development can be traced in soft-stone glyptic from the LM IIIA to the LM IIIB⁸⁶⁰. However, since **B-Cat. n. 77** is fresh from the workshop it is possible that unless it was earlier and for some reason kept unused before its deposition, this piece was a LM IIIB product. The piece belongs

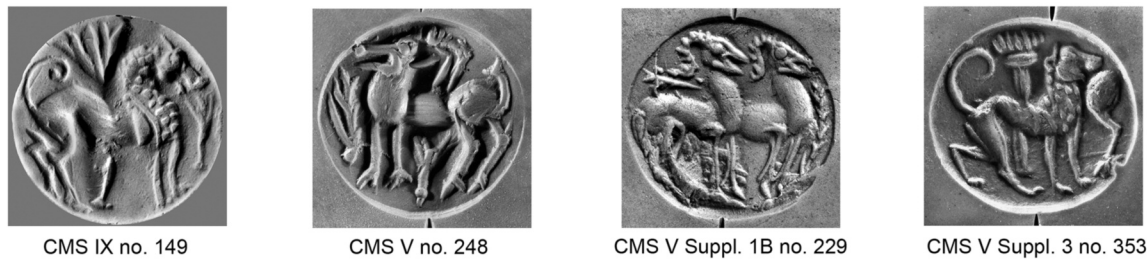


FIGURE 9.6 – EXAMPLES OF LM III LENTOIDS WITH DEPICTIONS OF STANDING *AGRIMIA* AND LIONS.

to a group of lentoids mostly cut in serpentine or schist and bearing the depictions of standing quadrupeds, mostly *agrimia* and lions (*fig. 9.6*)⁸⁶¹. Many representatives of this group are fresh from the workshop or only somewhat abraded and have been recovered in LM IIIA-LM IIIB or purely LM IIIB contexts. This could suggest that they were not circulating for a long time before their deposition in the graves and were a somewhat later development in LM III, namely LM IIIA2-B1.

⁸⁵⁸CMS IX no. 150.

⁸⁵⁹CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 253, 299. For the subject of unnatural poses in LM III, see KRZYSZKOWSKA 2005, p. 210.

⁸⁶⁰KRZYSZKOWSKA 2005, p. 214.

⁸⁶¹CMS I nos. 487, 495; CMS I Suppl. nos. 95, 97; CMS II,4 nos. 46 ('Apostoli Pediados'), 57 (Milatos, Grave 1, context LM IIIB1), 74, 197 ('Avdou'), 218; CMS II,8 nos. 290, 291 (both from Knossos); CMS III no. 410; CMS V nos. 248 (Armenoi, Grave 18), 250

(Armenoi, Grave 19, context LM IIIB1), 272 (Armenoi, Grave 54); CMS VI nos. 381, 438 ('Lato'), 439 ('Hagia Pelagia, Tholos, context LM IIIA2-LM IIIB'); CMS VII nos. 186, 239; CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 207 (Armenoi, Grave 71, context LM IIIA2-LM IIIB1), 219 (Armenoi, Grave 84, context LM IIIB1-LM IIIB2), 229 (Armenoi, Grave 102), 231 (Armenoi, Grave 104, context LM III), 238 (Armenoi, Grave 108, context LM III), 245 (Armenoi, Grave 111, context LM IIIA?); CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 353 (Mochlos); CMS IX no. 149. Fresh from the workshop or slightly

Materials

All the seals from Kalochorafitis are cut in soft stones with hand tools. Engraving of hard stones came to a halt in the period after LM IIIA2⁸⁶². Hard-stone seals are found in LM IIIA contexts and did also survive as heirlooms into LM IIIB. They are, for example, encountered in the cemetery of *Tombe dei Nobili* at Kalyvia which is dated to LM IIIA and are often attested in LM IIIB contexts as well as through their impressions on sealings of that period⁸⁶³. Their absence from the Kalochorafitis burials could perhaps suggest a more provincial circle of users whose members did not enjoy a status high enough to provide them with ties that would allow them ownership of such artefacts.

Seal Ownership at Kalochorafitis

Only two or three of the eight larnakes at Kalochorafitis contained seals. This could either suggest that not all members of the community buried in the tomb of Kalochorafitis owned a seal; or that seals would not always accompany their owner to the grave. The large number of heirloom seals used in LM III is indeed an indication that seals could be passed on through generations in family contexts and did not always have to accompany their owners to the grave⁸⁶⁴.

Certain characteristics of the seals from Kalochorafitis suggest that these artefacts were personal objects not only connected with sealing practices but also, or in some cases exclusively, functioning as amulets or symbols of status⁸⁶⁵. With the exception of **B-Cat. n. 78**, the remaining pieces are strongly abraded from wearing. The motifs of these seals would have not been easily discernible when impressed on clay. The state of preservation of the Kalochorafitis seals suggests that seals were worn on the body in LM III long enough to have become so abraded that their motifs were largely worn away. The fact that the seals were still worn when their motifs could not be discerned suggests that these pieces were personal artefacts significant for their owners independent of their use as sphragistic devices. The same is suggested by the fact that **B-Cat. n. 78** had not been used before its deposition with the dead buried in the larnax. It must have either been produced only for funerary consumption or owned by an individual who never used it in his/her lifetime.

The shape and pattern of abrasion of **B-Cat. n. 77** provides some insights into the possible importance of the seal motif for the owner or the society. John Younger suggested that seals worn by humans in Aegean art never display an engraved motif and saw this as an indication that seals were worn with the seal face facing the skin⁸⁶⁶. The back of **B-Cat. n. 77** is strongly convex as opposed to the seal face which is only slightly convex. The string-hole edges are strongly abraded on the sides of the seal face. This abrasion pattern suggests that the string was mainly rubbing against the stone on the part of the string-hole edges situated

abraded: e.g. CMS V nos. 247, 248 (Armenoi); Used for sealing: e.g. CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 147 (Chania).

⁸⁶²KRZYSZKOWSKA 2005, p. 199.

⁸⁶³For the seals from Kalyvia, see also further down, LM IIIA hard-stone seals in LM IIIB contexts: e.g. CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 106 (Chania); CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 19

(Kritsa). LM IIIA hard-stone seals impressed on LM IB sealings: e.g. CMS II,6 no 174 (Malia).

⁸⁶⁴For the subject of heirloom seals in LM III, see also pp. 267-269.

⁸⁶⁵For this subject, see also pp. 270-271. For the non-sphragistic functions of seals, see also YOUNGER

behind the seal face. This could be taken as an indication that the seal was worn with the seal face placed against the skin. The slightly convex seal face would have sat easily on the skin and thus promoted this way of wearing it, on the one hand causing wear from contact with the skin but on the other, also protecting the intaglio from abrasion and blows caused by its exposure. Some other seals from LM III contexts display similar patterns of wearing⁸⁶⁷.

If some seals were worn with the intaglios against the skin, their motifs would not have been visible and would thus only have been important for the owner and probably as identification tools when used for sealing. In these cases, when a seal was worn it would only transmit a potential message by its size and material. The local non-impressive materials of soft-stone seals may, however, not have been highly valued as luxury materials. This would suggest that in their function as amulets seals (at least when cut in soft stones) were highly personal objects chiefly of significance to the owner and not as vehicles to declare social status.

The idea that seals were worn with the seal face turned towards the skin cannot, however, be generalized. The string-holes of **B-Cat. nos. 75-76** have been uniformly abraded both on the side of the seal face and on the back side. The abrasion patterns of **B-Cat. n. 79** are peculiar because one string-hole edge is not abraded at all and the other is abraded only from the side of the seal face. It thus seems possible that a seal could have been worn in different ways depending on various factors such as personal preference.

9.3 Some Notes on LM III Glyptic

Seals in LM III

Seals were produced in Crete in LM III and used alongside heirloom seals from older periods and imports from other regions. Soft-stone seals were produced in Crete from LM IIIA and until the start of LM IIIB (*fig. 9.7a*)⁸⁶⁸. Lentoids, cut in schist and more rarely serpentine or steatite, with the depiction of quadrupeds and more rarely griffins are characteristic of the LM IIIA/B period⁸⁶⁹. The Kalochorafitis seals with depictions of the quadrupeds belong to this category. Human figures are rare but a few lentoids with depictions of humans are encountered⁸⁷⁰. Interestingly, humans depicted in LM III soft-stone glyptic are only female. They are either shown in pairs or combined with a quadruped, usually a wild goat but in one case also a griffin⁸⁷¹. This could be taken as an indication of the special significance of the female figure in LM III ritual as is also suggested by the cult of the goddesses with raised arms which become commonplace in this period⁸⁷². Moreover, it could also suggest that the character of the seals in this period was connected with beliefs related to the sphere of the metaphysical.

1977.

⁸⁶⁶YOUNGER 1977, p. 148.

⁸⁶⁷E.g. CMS V no. 261 (Armenoi); CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 113 (Chania); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 292 (Armenoi).

⁸⁶⁸Clear evidence for tracing a development between LM IIIA and LM IIIB soft-stone glyptic is missing because the contexts of LM III seals can most often be dated to LM III or LM IIIA-LM IIIB in gen-

eral. The few pieces which come from secure LM IIIB contexts belong to groups whose representatives are also attested in LM IIIA-LM IIIB.

⁸⁶⁹E.g. CMS V nos. 243, 248 (both from Armenoi); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 222 (Armenoi).

⁸⁷⁰E.g. CMS V no. 244 (Armenoi); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 256 (Armenoi); CMS VIII no. 95.

⁸⁷¹E.g. CMS V no. 244 (Armenoi); CMS VI no. 331;



FIGURE 9.7 — A. LM III SOFT STONE LENTOIDS FROM ARMENOI; B. LM III HARD STONE (FIRST FOUR) AND METAL (LAST) SEALS; C. LH/LM III SEALS FROM LM III CONTEXTS. THE FIRST TWO ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF MAINLAND GROUPS, THE THIRD IS A MITANNI SEAL AND THE LAST TWO ARE HEIRLOOM SEALS.

Fluorite lentoids found in LM III contexts often bear ornamental motifs comprising lines combined in a cross whose interstices are filled with parallels⁸⁷³. While the majority of fluorite seals are mainland products, the imagery of those found in Crete differs from that of the pieces found on the mainland which display mostly branches and lozenge motifs⁸⁷⁴. This suggests that the pieces found in Crete were manufactured on the island⁸⁷⁵. Rectangular blocks with centred-circles and lines mostly cut in schist are also typical LM III products⁸⁷⁶.

Hard-stone seals, mainly lentoids, were engraved until the end of LM IIIA (*fig. 9.7b*)⁸⁷⁷. Most common are depictions of quadrupeds, either alone, in pairs, or in groups of three⁸⁷⁸. Bulls are also popular, and goats and lions as well as animal attack scenes involving lions are not unknown⁸⁷⁹. Humans are rarely encountered and when seen, are mostly combined with quadrupeds in animal leaping or Master of Animal scenes⁸⁸⁰. A few representations of Minoan Genii are also found⁸⁸¹. Metal is rarely used in the production of LM III seals. Two rings made in tin, a silver (?) ring and a silver cushion may date to that period⁸⁸².

Seals characteristic of mainland groups, although not very numerous, are also found in LM III contexts (*fig. 9.7c*). Seals of the Mainland Popular Group found in Crete must represent imports from the mainland⁸⁸³. The small number of glass seals, cast in a mould, found in Crete could also represent imports, or at least – as perhaps a steatite mould for such seals said to have come from Knossos would suggest – pieces manufactured under the influence of mainland traditions⁸⁸⁴. Mitanni cylinder seals, although originating in the Levant, could have also been imported to Crete from the mainland where they are more common⁸⁸⁵. Imported seals, even when cut in soft materials, would have stood out as they were more difficult to come by, and could thus, perhaps in some cases, have been more highly valued.

A large number of the seals buried in LM III contexts are earlier than their contexts (*fig. 9.7c*). Seals as early as MM I have been recovered from LM III contexts whereas numerous hard and soft-stone MM II and LM I seals as well as metal signet rings are known from LM III contexts⁸⁸⁶. Such seals could have been heirlooms passed from hand to hand from generation to generation, or more rarely have been found by chance on the ground in LM III. Among such pieces, a prevalence of talismanic seals in LM III burial contexts is noted⁸⁸⁷. In Phylaki for example, half of the seals recovered in the grave are heirlooms; among them, most

CMS VIII no. 95.

⁸⁷²For more on this subject, see GESELL 2004.

⁸⁷³E.g. CMS V nos. 277 (Armenoi), 278 (Armenoi); DICKERS 2001, 89 *fig. 22*.

⁸⁷⁴E.g. CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 446 (Volos); CMS V Suppl. 2 no. 63 (Elateia). For this subject, see also DICKERS 2001, pp. 89-90, 92-94.

⁸⁷⁵DICKERS 2001, p. 90.

⁸⁷⁶E.g. CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 218 c (Armenoi).

⁸⁷⁷E.g. CMS V nos. 246, 252; CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 251.

⁸⁷⁸E.g. CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 106 (Chania); CMS II,4 no. 159 (Gournes); CMS II,3 no. 133 (Nirou Chani).

⁸⁷⁹E.g. CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 202 (Phylaki).

⁸⁸⁰E.g. CMS II,3 no. 66 (Knossos).

⁸⁸¹E.g. CMS II,3 nos. 112b (Kalyvia), 193 (Poros).

⁸⁸²CMS V no. 298 (Maleme); V Suppl. 1A nos. 111, 112 (Chania); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 208 (Armenoi).

⁸⁸³Mainland Popular Group: e.g. CMS II,4 no. 4 (Knossos); CMS V no. 255 (Armenoi); Glass seals: CMS V

Suppl. 1B nos. 239, 288 (Armenoi). For the Mainland Popular Group, see DICKERS 2001. For the view that seals of the Mainland Popular Group found in Crete were imported from the mainland, see also DICKERS 2001, p. 65 footnote 427. For the group of glass seals cast in a mould, see PINI 1981; 1999; DICKERS 2001, pp. 77-86.

⁸⁸⁴For the group of glass seals cast in a mould, see PINI 1981; 1999; DICKERS 2001, pp. 77-86. For the steatite mould from 'Knossos', see CMS XII no. 262.

⁸⁸⁵E.g. V Suppl. 3 no. 332 (Pangalochori).

⁸⁸⁶MM I: e.g. CMS II,2 no. 71 (Knossos). MM II: CMS II,2 nos. 74 (Episkopi), 75 (Episkopi); CMS V no. 263 (Armenoi); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 237 (Armenoi). MM III-LM I: e.g. CMS II,3 nos. 45 (Knossos), 128 (Knossos); CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 351 (Mochlos). LM I: e.g. CMS II,3 nos. 103, 114; CMS II,4 no. 210; CMS V no. 273 (Armenoi); V Suppl. 1B nos. 235, 247 (Armenoi). LM I-LM II: e.g. CMS II,3 no. 276 (Sfakia Siteias).

⁸⁸⁷E.g. CMS II,3 no. 270 (Sykia); CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 196 (Angeliana Mylopotamou), 211, 257, 293,

are talismanic⁸⁸⁸. In Upper Gypsades, all the seals are heirlooms and three of the four are talismanic⁸⁸⁹. This predominance could be taken as an indication that talismanic seals were indeed more closely connected with an amuletic function than other seals and were kept for this reason as special objects for many years within family contexts⁸⁹⁰. This would perhaps explain the reason why such pieces would have survived into the LM III period in larger quantities than others. Among soft-stone heirloom seals, an increased number of seals with ornamental motifs that are close to the talismanic as well as the architectural tradition can also be noted⁸⁹¹. This could also suggest that such seals had a stronger connection with an amuletic significance than others.

Seal Use in LM III

A series of observations suggests that seals were strongly personal objects in LM III⁸⁹². First, seals often accompanied their owners to the grave, as is evident in the large number of seals that have been recovered from tombs⁸⁹³. The intensively abraded surface of some soft-stone pieces suggests that these objects had been worn on the body for a considerable period of time (*fig. 9.8a*). In some cases, despite the fact that the motifs on their seal faces are so abraded that they can hardly be recognized and the shape has been badly deformed by abrasion, the seals were still worn⁸⁹⁴. In such cases, the motifs would not have been discernible on either the seal face or an impression. Moreover, the soft local materials and the deformed shape would most probably

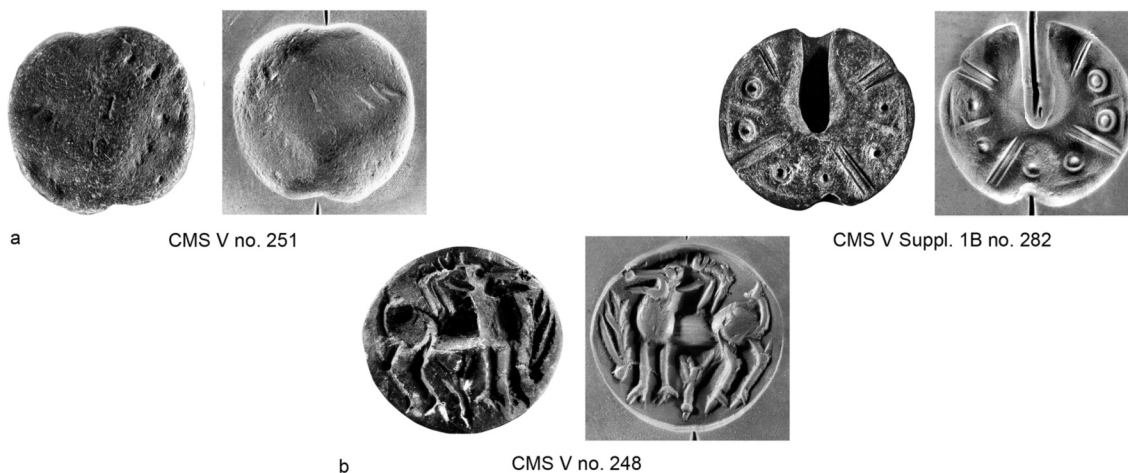


FIGURE 9.8 — A. LM III LENTOIDS WITH ABRADED SEAL FACE AND DEFORMED SHAPE FROM ARMENOI;
B. LM III FRESH FROM THE WORKSHOP LENTOIDS FROM A GRAVE IN ARMENOI.

294, 297, 300 (Armenoi). For the talismanic seals, see ONASSOGLU 1985.

⁸⁸⁸CMS V Suppl. 1A nos. 190-195. CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 203 belongs to the Cut Style which is close to the talismanic style. For the Cut Style, see PINI 2000.

⁸⁸⁹CMS II,3 nos. 46-49.

⁸⁹⁰For the idea that the talismanic seals had an amuletic character, see EVANS 1921, pp. 672-675; EVANS 1935, pp. 445-450; XENAKI-SAKELLARIOU 1958, pl.

XVII; KENNA 1969, pp. 7, 9, 26, 32. For a critical discussion of this subject, see BOARDMAN 1970, p. 42; ONASSOGLU 1985, pp. 200-202.

⁸⁹¹E.g. CMS II,4 no. 128 (Knossos); CMS V Suppl. 3 nos. 27 (Malia), 351 (Mochlos).

⁸⁹²For the opinion that seals in the Aegean Bronze Age had both a sphragistic and an amuletic function, see also BETTS 1974, p. 309.

⁸⁹³See below, pp. 272-276.

not make these objects attractive as items for display. This suggests that, at least soft-stone seals, had an amuletic significance for their owners independent of their function as sphragistic devices. The deposition of seals that are fresh from the workshop in graves also underlines the importance of seals as personal objects in LM III (*fig. 9.8b*)⁸⁹⁵. Whether made exclusively for funerary use or owned by the individual for a longer period of time but kept unused as valuable objects, such seals would have had special significance unconnected with their use for sealing.

Apart from their function as amulets, seals were also used sphragistically in LM III (*fig. 9.9*). More than thirty sealings have been recovered from secure LM III contexts, the vast major-



FIGURE 9.9— IMPRESSIONS OF SEALS ON LM III SEALINGS: FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: IMPRESSION ON A STOPPER, MALIA; IMPRESSION ON A TWO-HOLE HANGING NODULE, KNOSSOS; IMPRESSION ON A FLAT BASED NODULE, KNOSSOS; IMPRESSION ON A STOPPER, CHANIA.

ity of which comes from Chania and Knossos⁸⁹⁶. Hard-stone seals were used to impress the majority of these sealings but soft-stone examples as well as the odd metal signet ring are also attested⁸⁹⁷. LM III seals as well as pieces of earlier date were impressed on such sealings⁸⁹⁸.

In their use as sphragistic devices, seals were used in LM III mostly for labelling and securing. Two-hole hanging nodules, which depending on their shape had a labelling or securing function, are most often represented in LM III contexts⁸⁹⁹. Among the sealings with a securing function, flat-based nodules, combination nodules (securing and labelling), direct object sealings and stoppers are also represented. LM III sealings with a function related to identification (tokens) have not been found in secure LM III contexts. However,

⁸⁹⁴E.g. CMS V no. 251 (Armenoi); CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 282 (Armenoi).

⁸⁹⁵E.g. CMS V nos. 247, 248 (Armenoi). Kalocho-
rafitis: HMS 2540.

⁸⁹⁶Chania: Two-hole hanging nodule: Chania 1025A (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 127). Roundel: Chania 2116 (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 139), 2117 (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 143), 2118 (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 144). Combination sealing: Chania 1567 (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 141). Direct object sealing: Chania 1565 (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 146). Stopper: Chania 1564 (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 149), 1566 (CMS V Suppl. 1A nos. 147-148). Vessel: Chania 6634 (CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 150). Knossos: Flat-based nodules: HMs 110 (CMS II,8 no. 497), 111 (CMS II,8 no. 460), 253 (CMS II,8 no. 307), 1243 (CMS II,8 Add. 6). Two-hole hanging nodules: HMs 112 (CMS II,8 no. 138), 121 (CMS II,8 no. 467),

122 (CMS II,8 no. 507), 141/1-2 (CMS II,8 no. 256), HMs 143 (CMS II,8 no. 233), HMs 160-161 (CMS II,8 no. 262), HMs 418 (CMS II,8 no. 273), HMs 657 (CMS II,8 no. 84), HMs no. 658 (CMS II,8 no. 184), HMs 659 (CMS II,8 no. 164), 1546 (HMs II,8 no. 691) 1547 (CMS II,8 no. 231), 1938.1014b, d (CMS II,8 no. 287). Combination sealing: HMs 214-215 (CMS II,8 no. 287). Unknown shape: HMs 1548 (CMS II,8 no. 481). Malia: Stopper: HMs 1049 (CMS II,6 nos. 173, 174), 1095 (CMS II,6 no. 210). Palaikastro: Weight: HmP 4815 (CMS II,6 no. 245).

⁸⁹⁷Soft stone e.g. CMS II,8 no. 184; CMS V Suppl. 1A nos. 146, 148, 149. Metal signet ring: CMS II,8 no. 497.

⁸⁹⁸Earlier seals e.g. MM II: CMS II,8 no. 84 (hard stone); LM I: CMS II,8 nos. 138, 164, 262 (soft stone) CMS II,8 nos. 256, 273 (metal).

⁸⁹⁹For the function of two-hole hanging nodules, see

two noduli from Knossos inscribed with Linear B and impressed by a LM II-LM IIIA1 seal and a nodulus from the Giamalakis Collection with the impression of a LM II-LM IIIA seal suggest that these sealings were still used in the Final Palatial period⁹⁰⁰.

Distribution of Seals in LM III (fig. 9.10)

The vast majority of seals from secure LM III contexts come from graves⁹⁰¹. Among them, the largest group is the seals found in the excavation of the cemetery of Armenoi which was in use from LM IIIA-LM IIIB (over 150 seals)⁹⁰². The material from the cemetery is variable containing mainly soft but also hard-stone LM III seals, a few metal rings, some seals cut in bone, LH III seals imported from the mainland, and Minoan seals older than their context⁹⁰³. Small groups of seals cut both in hard and soft materials have also come to light in other LM III chamber tombs from the north part of the Rethymno prefecture, in Angeliana and Maroulas, and from the dromos of a LM III chamber tomb in Kritsa in the eastern part of the island⁹⁰⁴.

Some sites have produced exclusively or almost exclusively seals cut in hard stones and more rarely metal. Most notable among these are the LM IIIA graves of the cemetery *Tombe dei Nobili* at Kalyvia in the Mesara which have produced LM IIIA hard-stone seals and three metal rings⁹⁰⁵. Another group of hard-stone seals was recovered from the LM IIIA-B Tholos Tomb in Phylaki⁹⁰⁶. Smaller groups of seals cut mainly in hard stones and more rarely metal, glass, fluorite and frit have been recovered from cemeteries and tombs at Chania and Maleme to the west, Isopata,

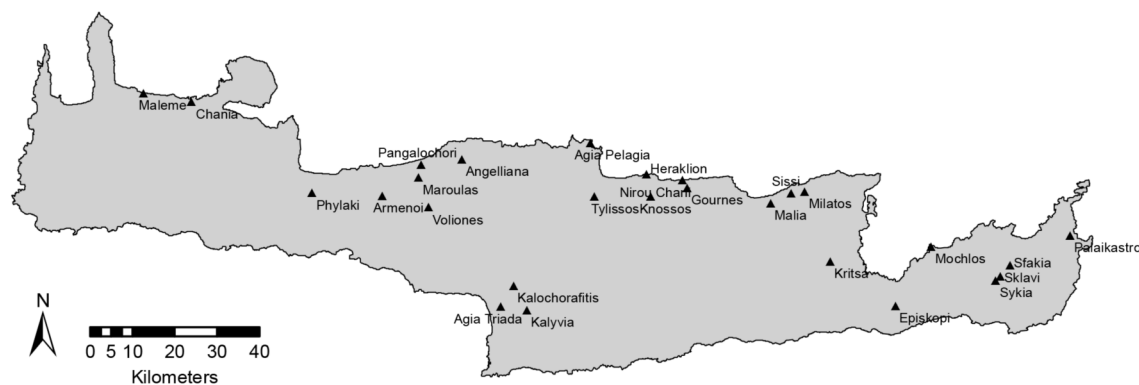


FIGURE 9.10— SITES IN CRETE WHERE SEALS HAVE BEEN FOUND IN LM III CONTEXTS.

MÜLLER 2002, pp. 52-69. For the sealings of the different types recovered in LM III contexts, see footnote 896.

⁹⁰⁰HMs 156, 224 (CMS II,8 no. 513). HMGiam 3095 (CMS II,6 no. 280). Some roundels from LM III contexts in Chania and a weight from an LM III context at Palaikastro must represent LM I and MM II objects already impressed in these periods.

⁹⁰¹This analysis only takes into consideration seals that have been found in secure LM III contexts and is based mainly on the data from the material published in the CMS.

⁹⁰²For the seals from Armenoi, see CMS V nos. 241-283; CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 201-314; CMS V

Suppl. 3 nos. 321-322. For information regarding the finds in the graves where seals were found, see CMS V pp. 185-188; CMS V Suppl. 1B 205-214 (with further references to the preliminary reports); CMS V Suppl. 3 p. 475. For the cemetery of Armenoi, see also TZEDAKIS 1996; TZEDAKIS-MARTLEW 2007.

⁹⁰³LM III seals: e.g. CMS V no. 246; CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 228; LH III seals: e.g. CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 239, 311; Seals older than their context: e.g. CMS V no. 263.

⁹⁰⁴Angeliana: CMS V Suppl. 1B nos. 196-200. Maroulas: CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 315; CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 331. Kritsa (context LM IIIB): CMS V Suppl. 3 nos. 18-19.

⁹⁰⁵CMS II,3 nos. 99-115; CMS II,4 nos. 16-17?.



FIGURE 9.11— THE DISTRIBUTION OF SEALS OF DIFFERENT MATERIALS FOUND IN LM III CONTEXTS.

Zapher Papoura, Sellopoulo, and Upper Gypsades around Knossos, and at Gournes and Nirou Chani a little to the east on the north coast⁹⁰⁷. Among such groups, the occasional imported seal, such as Mitanni cylinder seals, are also encountered⁹⁰⁸. Single finds of hard-stone seals in graves have also been found at Voliones in the western part of the island, Katsambas and Tylissos in north central Crete, Agia Triada to the south, and Sykia and Sfakia to the east⁹⁰⁹. Finally a Mitanni cylinder seal was recovered from a LM III chamber tomb at Pangalochori, Rethymno⁹¹⁰.

Small groups of seals cut mainly in soft stones have been recovered in a few LM III tombs or cemeteries. Seals, in mainly soft stones, have been found in secure LM III contexts soft-stone seals at the Knossian cemetery of Mavro Spileo, at Milatos and at Mochlos towards the east, and now, at Kalochorafitis⁹¹¹. A few LM III burials have produced single finds of soft-stone seals, such as Hagia Pelagia, west of Heraklion, and Sklavi and Palaikastro in the east⁹¹². A seal cut in an artificial material has been recovered from Episkopi, Ierapetra⁹¹³.

A small number of seals have come to light in LM III residential contexts. Most of these come from Malia but some examples have also been recovered from Chania to the west as well as Sissi and Palaikastro to the east⁹¹⁴. In Chania, three out of seven seals are cut in hard stones. At the remaining sites in the eastern part of the island soft-stone seals constitute the clear majority.

A look at the distribution of hard and soft-stone seals in LM III contexts reveals a larger connection of western and central Crete with hard-stone glyptic (*fig. 9.11*). The tombs from the far western part of the island, namely those at Chania and particularly those from Phylaki have mainly produced hard-stone seals. A considerable number of hard-stone seals also comes from the cemeteries around Knossos and from Kalyvia in the Mesara. The exclusive use of hard stones and metal for the seals deposited in Kalyvia and Phylaki suggests privileged communities buried in these graves. Soft-stone seals were, however, in use in the western part of the island and in the centre along with hard-stone seals as is suggested on the one hand by the recovery of such objects from the settlement in Chania, and on the other hand by their recovery from tombs at Knossos and now, Kalochorafitis in the Mesara.

⁹⁰⁶CMS V Suppl. 1A nos. 188-203; CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 118 (soft-stone seal but not from a dated context).

⁹⁰⁷Chania (contexts range from LM IIIA to LM IIIB): CMS V Suppl. 1A nos. 102-113, 185; CMS V Suppl. 3 nos. 109-115. Maleme (context LM IIIB): CMS V nos. 297, 298. Isopata (context LM IIIA1): CMS II,3 nos. 51-56; CMS II,4 nos. 118, 119. Zapher Papoura (context LM IIIA?, LM II-LM IIIB): CMS II,3 nos. 40-45; CMS II,4 no. 120. Sellopoulo (context LM IIIA2-LM IIIB, LM IIIA): CMS II,3 nos. 66-69; CMS II,4 no. 122. Epano Gypsades (context LM IIIA2): CMS II,3 nos. 46-49. Gournes (context LM IIIB1) CMS II,4 nos. 157-161. Nirou Chani (context LM IIIB?): CMS II,3 nos. 133-136.

⁹⁰⁸E.g. from Zapher Papoura: CMS II,3 no. 43.

⁹⁰⁹Voliones (context LM IIIB-LM IIIC): CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 318. Katsambas (context LM IIIA1): CMS II,3 no. 129. Tylissos (context LM IIIB-LM IIIC): CMS II,3 no. 123. Hagia Triada (context LM IIIA-LM IIIB): CMS II,3 no. 118. Sykia (context LM

IIIB-LM IIIC): CMS II,3 no. 270. Sfakia Siteias (context LM IIIB): CMS II,3 no. 276.

⁹¹⁰Pangalochori (context LM IIIA1-LM IIIA2): CMS V Suppl. 3 no. 332.

⁹¹¹Mavro Spileo (contexts LM III): CMS II,4 nos. 123, 126-128. Milatos (contexts LM IIIA-LM IIIB, LM IIIB1): CMS II,4 nos. 57, 58; CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 59 (glass). Mochlos (contexts LM III, LM IIIA2-LM IIIB): CMS V Suppl. 1B no. 335; CMS V Suppl. 3 nos. 351-353.

⁹¹²Hagia Pelagia (context LM IIIB?): CMS VI no. 439. Sklavi (context LM IIIB): CMS V no. 23. Palaikastro (context LM III?): CMS II,3 no. 282.

⁹¹³Episkopi (context LM IIIB): CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 372.

⁹¹⁴Malia: (contexts LM III, LM IIIA2-B, LM IIIB): CMS II,4 nos. 22, 23; CMS V Suppl. 3 nos. 22-23, 26, 27, 29-37. Chania (contexts LM IIIA, LM IIIB, LM IIIC): CMS V no. 238; CMS V Suppl. 1A nos. 117, 123-127. Sissi: ANASTASIADOU 2011b; 2012. Palai-

The absence of soft-stone seals from tombs in the Chania area could perhaps suggest that in this part of the island they were less popular as grave gifts because of their lower value. The recovery of seals from only a small number of graves in the cemetery could perhaps support this hypothesis⁹¹⁵. If seals in the Chania cemetery were buried with the dead only occasionally, it could be that only or mainly pieces of higher value were considered worthy as grave goods⁹¹⁶. The image that emerges for the Mesara and Knossos based on the evidence from glyptic is that of the existence of separate cemeteries of communities, namely those that consumed hard-stone and metal seals and ones that consumed soft-stone seals.

The image from Armenoi is somewhat different. Seals cut in valuable materials, such as hard stone and metal, imported seals, which would perhaps be more highly valued as *exotica*, as well as glass and fluorite seals have been found⁹¹⁷. However, seals cut in local soft stones constitute the majority of the finds. The small groups of seals from Angeliana and Maroulas could be interpreted as suggestive of a similar image. This would suggest that the Armenoi cemetery was used from a community incorporating members consuming a wider range of seals which, presumably, reflects a wider range of social status.

The eastern part of the island has only produced a small number of seals from LM III contexts. Among those, soft-stone seals predominate. Hard-stone seals are rare exceptions both in burial and residential contexts as is most notably shown at Malia. There, only two of the fifteen seals found are cut in hard stones. Malia, which had already been an important centre for the production of soft-stone seals in MM II, has produced the largest number of soft-stone seals from one site in LM III contexts⁹¹⁸.

The association of hard-stone seals with the central and western part of the island in LM III could draw glyptic into the discussion of the possible Mycenaean influences on the island in this period. On the LH I-LH IIIA1 mainland, seals were used that were made exclusively of precious materials, mostly hard stones and metals⁹¹⁹. The presence of hard-stone seals and metal rings in Chania and the central part of the island could then be seen as a further indication of mainland influence in these areas of the island. The distribution of Mitanni cylinder seals in these regions, which are more popular in the mainland, and fluorite seals which could perhaps suggest contact with the mainland where more examples of such seals have been recovered could also support this hypothesis. Moreover, the presence of nine hard-stone seals in the tomb of one individual at Chania and of fifteen pieces in the Phylaki tholos brings to mind the deposition of twenty-nine seals in the cist grave of the Vapheio Tholos⁹²⁰. Such rather intensive patterns of consumption of hard-stone seals in western and central Crete could suggest a growing perception of seals as symbols of status and be connected with the way they seem to have been perceived in the early Mycenaean period in the mainland. They need not necessarily, or always, suggest owner-

kastro (context LM III?, LM IIIC): CMS II,4 no. 210; CMS V Suppl. 1A no. 397.

⁹¹⁵For the LM III cemetery in Chania, see ANDREADAKI VLASAKI 1997.

⁹¹⁶For the recovery of seals from a few tombs in the Chania cemetery, see ANDREADAKI VLASAKI 1997, p. 504. The possibility, however, that areas with tombs containing soft-stone seals have not yet been recovered cannot be ruled out.

⁹¹⁷For the high value of metals and hard stones in

Aegean glyptic, see MÜLLER 2012.

⁹¹⁸For the importance of Malia as a centre of production of soft-stone seals in MM II, see ANASTASIADOU 2011A, pp. 63-115, especially pp. 112-114.

⁹¹⁹KRZYSZKOWSKA 2005, p. 236.

⁹²⁰Chania: Hagios Giannis Cemetery, Grave 1 (CMS V Suppl. 1A nos. 102-110). For the tomb, see also CMS V Suppl. 1A p. 105 with further bibliography; also ANDREADAKI VLASAKI 1997, pp. 491, 504. For the Tholos Tomb in Vapheio, see TSOUNTAS 1889; KILIAN

ship by a mainland element present on Crete but could also simply reflect mainland influence on how seals were perceived as artefacts in these parts of the island.

Soft-stone glyptic in Crete continues the long Minoan tradition of soft stone engraving that started on the island as early as EM II. LM III soft-stone lentoids in particular continue the tradition of LM I soft-stone seal engraving, a craft virtually absent from the mainland until LH IIIA2⁹²¹. The tradition of engraving soft materials in Crete and the absence of this craft from the mainland could perhaps suggest a stronger link of soft-stone seals with a 'Minoan' element in LM III. The scarcity of hard-stone seals from the eastern part of the island and the predominance of soft-stone seals could reflect less mainland influence there. Similarly, the large quantity of soft-stone LM III seals from the cemetery of Armenoi could perhaps reflect the presence of a strong 'Minoan' or local element in the area. If we accept this scenario, the Kalochorafitis seals could also be connected with a strong indigenous element in the Mesara.

DIRLMEIER 1987.

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PLATES



HMS 2537



HMS 2538



HMS 2539



HMS 2540



HMS 2541

PLATE XI — THE SEALS FROM KALOCHORAFITIS B-CAT. NOS. 75-79 TO SCALE (2:1).

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