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NOTA DIMOPOULOU – OLGA KRZYSZKOWSKA

Seals from the Minoan chamber tombs at Poros

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HERAUSGEBER

Katja Sporn und Reinhard Senff  
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Athen  
Fidiou 1  
10678 Athen  
Griechenland

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# Seals from the Minoan chamber tombs at Poros

NOTA DIMOPOULOU – OLGA KRZYSZKOWSKA

Siegel aus den minoischen Kammergräbern von Poros

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG** In diesem Aufsatz werden vierzig Siegel und drei Skarabäen vorgestellt, welche Nota Dimopoulou während Ausgrabungen zwischen 1986 und 2002 in sechs minoischen Kammergräbern in Poros, dem Gebiet des Haupthafens von Knossos, bergen konnte. Diese großen Felsgräber, die Teil einer neupalastzeitlichen Nekropole waren, wurden für mehrere Dutzend Bestattungen ab der Phase Mittelminoisch IIB bis Spätminoisch IB genutzt, wonach der Friedhof aufgegeben wurde. Für jedes Grab werden die Ausgrabungen beschrieben und die wichtigsten Funde vorgestellt. Es folgen detaillierte Katalogeinträge mit Vergleichen und Kommentaren zu den darin gefundenen Siegeln. Hinweise auf Kontextdatierungen werden ebenfalls vorgelegt. Der Artikel schließt mit einer Diskussion über die Vielfalt der vertretenen Materialien und Stilgruppen ab, in welcher auch die außergewöhnliche Qualität der Siegel hervorgehoben wird. Im Katalog werden die Siegelabdrücke in Halbtonfotos abgebildet. Farbige Sammelabbildungen geben die originalen Siegelbilder sowie die Profile der Siegel wider, jeweils gruppiert nach Grab.

*Schlagwörter* Kammergrab; Kreta; Glyptik; minoisch; Siegel.

**ABSTRACT** This article presents forty seals and three scarabs found in six Minoan chamber tombs at Poros, excavated by Nota Dimopoulou between 1986 and 2002 in the area of the main port of Knossos. These large rock-cut tombs, part of a Neopalatial cemetery, were used for many dozens of burials from as early as Middle Minoan II B until Late Minoan IB, after which the cemetery was abandoned. For each tomb a description is given of the excavation and principal finds, followed by detailed catalogue entries, with comparanda and commentaries, for the seals found therein; evidence for context dating is also provided. The article concludes by discussing the range of materials and style groups represented, emphasizing the exceptional quality of the seals. Impressions of the seals are illustrated with half-tone photographs accompanying the catalogue entries. Composite figures in colour show the original faces and profiles of the seals, grouped according to tomb.

*Keywords* chamber tomb; Crete; glyptic; Minoan; seals.

Σφραγίδες από τους μινωικούς θαλαμωτούς τάφους του Πόρου

**ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ** Στο άρθρο αυτό παρουσιάζονται σαράντα σφραγίδες και τρεις σκαραβαίοι που βρέθηκαν σε έξι μινωικούς θαλαμωτούς τάφους που ανέσκαψε η Νότα Δημοπούλου από το 1986 έως το 2002 στον Πόρο, στην περιοχή του κύριου επινείου της Κνωσού. Αυτοί οι μεγάλοι λαξευτοί τάφοι, που αποτελούσαν τμήμα μιας νεοανακτορικής νεκρόπολης, χρησιμοποιήθηκαν για δεκάδες ταφές ο καθένας από τη μεσομινωική IIB μέχρι την υστερομινωική IB φάση, μετά την οποία το νεκροταφείο εγκαταλείφθηκε. Περιγράφεται η ανασκαφή κάθε τάφου και αναφέρονται τα σημαντικότερα ευρήματα. Ακολουθούν λεπτομερείς καταχωρήσεις καταλόγου για τις σφραγίδες με σχετικά παράλληλα και σχόλια και παρέχονται στοιχεία χρονολόγησης, βάσει της ανασκαφικής συνάφειας. Το άρθρο συμπληρώνεται με συζήτηση για το εύρος των εκπροσωπούμενων υλών και των στυλιστικών ομάδων, ενώ τονίζεται επίσης η εξαιρετική ποιότητα των σφραγίδων. Στον κατάλογο απεικονίζονται τα αποτυπώματα των σφραγίδων σε ασπρόμαυρες φωτογραφίες. Έγχρωμες φωτογραφικές συνθέσεις απεικονίζουν τις κύριες όψεις και τα προφίλ των σφραγίδων, ομαδοποιημένων κατά τάφο.

*Λέξεις-κλειδιά* Θαλαμωτός τάφος. Κρήτη. Μικρογλυπτική. Μινωικός. Σφραγίδες.

## INTRODUCTION

This article presents the Minoan seals (with the exception of the seals and signet rings of gold), as well as the imported scarabs and cylinder seal, which were found in six Minoan chamber tombs at Poros (Tombs I–VI), excavated by Nota Dimopoulou between 1986 and 2002 in the area of the main port of Knossos. They form part of the central sector of the Neopalatial cemetery of large, rich rock-cut tombs on the rocky hill of Trypiti, which rises above the Minoan settlement and port. The six tombs were found lying close together on plots and streets of the modern, densely built-up, eastern suburb of Herakleion, during the course of private and public works, as were the three previously excavated in the same central nucleus of large tombs<sup>1</sup>.

The tombs have multiple chambers dug out of the hard limestone, with a total area ranging from 60 to 90 m<sup>2</sup>. They were used for many dozens of burials over a long period of time, from as early as MM IIB (T. III) and continuing more intensively during MM III and LM I to LM IB, when the latest burials are dated, after which the cemetery was abandoned<sup>2</sup>. Very few burials, mainly LM IB in date, were found in situ completely or at least partially undisturbed. The deceased were placed on funerary beds or biers. With the exception of one tomb (T. III), the chambers had been looted or badly disturbed, both in antiquity and relatively recently (T. II). In some cases the chambers were found empty, not only of offerings but in some cases even of bones, and looked as though they had been ›swept out‹. This

Our warmest thanks go to the following colleagues and personnel for supporting our study in the Archaeological Museum of Herakleion: the Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities, Dr. Vassilike Sythiakaki; the Assistant Director, Ioanna Serpetsidaki; and the Epemeletria of Antiquities, Eva Mitaki; the Director of the Archaeological Museum, Dr. Stella Mandalaki; the Curator of the Department of Prehistoric and Minoan Collections, Dr. Georgia Flouda; the Curator of the Department of Exhibitions and Education Programmes, Katerina Athanasaki; and other members of staff; the Curator of the Museum's Conservation Laboratory, Giorgos Marakis; and staff members Michalis Papayiannakis, Yiannis Rogdakis and Rena Sinadinaki; the Museum guards in the Study Room, especially Marina Stratigi, Emmanouela Sinadinaki and Giorgos Stavrakakis. Nota Dimopoulou extends her thanks to Rosemary Tzanaki for help in translating the sections on the excavation and tomb contents. She is also extremely grateful to Giorgos Rethemiotakis for his valuable advice and constant support. Olga Krzyszkowska cordially thanks Maria Anastasiadou and Diamantis Panagiotopoulos for making available to her facilities for study and photography in the CMS Archive, Heidelberg. She also expresses her deep gratitude to the Institute of Classical Studies in London for supporting her work on this project.

The following abbreviations are used throughout the paper, in addition to those commonly employed under DAI guidelines:

EM	Early Minoan
MM	Middle Minoan
LM	Late Minoan
LH	Late Helladic
LB	Late Bronze

Dm	diameter
H	height
L	length
W	width
SH(s)	diameter(s) of string-hole(s)
T.	Tomb
Th	thickness
max.	maximum
pres.	preserved

CHIC	J.-P. Olivier – L. Godart, <i>Corpus Hieroglyphicarum Inscriptionum Cretae</i> , EtCret 31 (Athens 1996)
DtS	A. Onassoglou, <i>Die ›talismanischen‹ Siegel</i> , CMS Beih. 2 (Berlin 1985)

<sup>1</sup> Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2004, 366–373 figs. 31.3–31.22. No seals are reported from Tomb Π–1940, excavated by N. Platon in 1940 (Platon 1941). Six seals were found in Tomb Π–1967, excavated by A. Lembessi in 1967 and published by P. Muhly (Lembessi 1967; Muhly 1992), while two seals from the (unpublished) Tomb Π–1978, excavated by Y. Tzedakis and A. Vasiliakis in 1978, are recorded in the Herakleion Museum catalogues. Other sphragistic evidence, like the signet rings and seals of gold found in Tombs I–VI, was not found in the previous three tombs. No seals or other notable finds were discovered in the smaller peripheral looted tombs excavated around the central sector (Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2004, 368 f., n. 22).

<sup>2</sup> A few poor later burials, only accompanied by some LM III conical cups, were rather carelessly deposited at the entrance to Tomb I, as in the tomb excavated by Platon in 1940 (Platon 1941).

is due either to the chamber being used as habitation or shelter in modern times (T. V), or to a general clearing of the tomb to receive later burials (inner chamber of T. I). The bones and remains of earlier burials were removed piecemeal and mixed together, either pushed against the chamber walls (T. II) or in niches (T. VI), but were mainly piled up in deposits inside the tombs. Despite the complete or partial looting and periodic clearing of the chambers, the deposits fortunately escaped disturbance and were found intact, with the exception of that in T. II.

Thousands of exceptional finds of all types come from both the chambers and the deposits. There are hundreds of intact decorated vases, mainly cups and jugs, covering all phases from MM IIB to LM IB. There is a notable absence of bronze implements and weapons, of which only scanty remains survived, in contrast to the contents of some unlooted elite graves in the following Final Palatial period in the Knossos and Archanes areas. This most probably indicates that looters at Poros, as elsewhere, targeted bronze for recycling. However, small valuables were missed by the looters; they include necklaces of precious, semi-precious and other materials<sup>3</sup>, gold signet rings and seals, and the seals S1–S43 presented here, 27 of which were found in the chambers and 16 in the deposits.

The continuous use of the tombs for long periods of time, the disturbance of the burials, and the arrangements inside the chambers to allow for more inhumations, plus the looting, only allow us to date the associated pottery on the basis of stylistic criteria and comparative material rather than excavation data, as became apparent in the detailed publication of the tomb excavated in 1967<sup>4</sup>. The same is true of the deposits: even in the deepest ones, the stratigraphic sequence is not always clear, as vases of different stylistic phases were often found together in the same spot, indicating a single depositional event but with mixed burial material of different chronological levels<sup>5</sup>. It should therefore be noted that the term ›layer‹ (see Contexts, below) is not taken to mean a closed stratigraphical-chronological sequence; moreover, in the deep deposits, vases such as tall jugs penetrated two or three layers of the fill. In the cases, however, where the context seems largely unmixed and diagnostic, the stylistic classification of the pottery does not generally seem to depart chronologically from that of the seals.

The report below is arranged as follows: each tomb is presented in turn, with its excavation and contents described by the excavator, Nota Dimopoulou; each is accompanied by a detailed Catalogue of the seals found therein, prepared by Olga Krzyszkowska<sup>6</sup>. Context information in the Catalogue entries is supplied by the excavator. For each tomb the Minoan seals are ordered by approximate *stylistic* date; scarabs are listed briefly at the end of each tomb<sup>7</sup>. Descriptions of the *motifs* are based on the impressions. Black-and-white illustrations of the impressions are not to scale; the colour images of seals on composite figures (*figs. 1–7*) are shown at a uniform 2 : 1.

The Discussion and Conclusions (both by Krzyszkowska in consultation with Dimopoulou) offer selected remarks on materials, style and iconography, as well as assessing the overall significance of the seals for our understanding of Minoan glyptic.

[N. D.]

<sup>3</sup> Dimopoulou 2000b, 114–117 cat. nos. 93–96.

<sup>4</sup> Muhly 1992, 29–38. 103–117.

<sup>5</sup> With reference to stratified Protopalatial and Neopalatial pottery assemblages from Knossos and its periphery: see MacGillivray 2007 (MM IB–MM IIIA) and Hatzaki 2007 (MM IIIB–LM IB). Also Rethemiotakis and Warren 2014 (MM III); papers in Macdonald – Knappett 2013 (MM III); Brogan – Hallager 2011 (LM IB); Mathioudaki 2018 (MM III).

<sup>6</sup> Abbreviations of literature appear in the Bibliography.

<sup>7</sup> Observations on the scarab shapes, face designs and dating were provided by Dr. J. Phillips, to whom we are most grateful. These are based on photographs supplied to her by Krzyszkowska, rather than autopsy.

## I. TOMB ON SPANAKIS STREET (1986)

### Excavation and Contents

The rock-cut tomb<sup>8</sup> was discovered in 1986 during digging work in the schoolyard of the 14<sup>th</sup> Primary School on Spanakis Street<sup>9</sup>. It has an area of around 70 m<sup>2</sup> and an elongated asymmetrical outline with two consecutive chambers, an antechamber and a pit deposit 2.20 m deep, dug in the floor at the rear of the inner chamber. The entrance blocking, to which led a descending stepped dromos, had been breached and the tomb had already been looted repeatedly since antiquity, as evidenced by Mycenaean sherds and a Protogeometric juglet. The inner Chamber A was found almost completely empty, as if cleared and swept out. This is probably where most of the contents of the deposit come from. The antechamber and the adjoining Chamber B were heavily disturbed; the deposit, on the contrary, had not been discovered by the looters and remained intact. A large amount of skeletal material was collected from this area, together with the remains of funerary beds and biers and many important finds.

The vases number in the hundreds, of which more than 250 are intact, mainly jugs and sets of cups of various types. On the basis of the pottery, the tomb's use extends from MM IIIA to LM IB with characteristic types such as white-dotted ridged and late polychrome cups, and Marine Style, Floral and Alternating Style decoration respectively. The intermediate Neopalatial MM IIIB and LM IA phases are represented by dozens of vases mostly from the deposit, with typical white-on-black decoration and dark-on-light spirals and floral motifs, etc.

In the antechamber was discovered the only partially undisturbed burial, associated with a beautiful cup decorated with crocuses<sup>10</sup>, the exceptional LM IB Marine Style ewer<sup>11</sup>, and the first gold signet ring (HM 1627) from the Poros tombs<sup>12</sup>. Other notable finds included necklace beads of gold, amethyst, faience and other materials found pushed aside in a corner of the empty Chamber A; gold, lead and bronze earrings, faience hoops and miniature cups, and dozens of small objects of various materials, including bronze staples and nails from the wooden funerary beds and biers. Of the seven seals **S1–S7** found in the tomb, three come from the deposit, one from the Antechamber, one from the inner Chamber A and two from Chamber B, where scarab **S8** was also found.

### Catalogue

#### S1 Lentoid (HM 3230)

fig. 1

Biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Edges slightly worn; some chipping at string-holes; cracking on reverse. Dm 1.1 cm, Th 0.5 cm, SHs 0.15–0.20 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, fiery orange-red with some paler yellow areas; mostly translucent, but with some cloudy patches and fine dark veins especially on the reverse.

*Motif:* the face is divided into registers; across the lower portion, two broad horizontal bands; between

them fine cross-hatching; beneath the lower band a series of short diagonal lines. Between the uppermost horizontal band and the upper edge of the seal, two broad curving bands; faint horizontal lines join these and run to the left (but not the right). Either side of the curving bands are two pairs of parallel vertical lines. Near the upper edge of the seal face the broad bands are linked by a pair of diagonal lines with hatching in between.

*Commentary and comparanda:* no close parallels exist, but cf. CMS III nos. 266. 267. The motif employs cer-

<sup>8</sup> Dimopoulou 1988, 325–329 pls. 8α. β; 9α. β; also Dimopoulou 1987, 528 f.

<sup>9</sup> Previously named Tritonos Street, where Tomb Π–1967 had been excavated a few dozen metres south of Tomb I.

<sup>10</sup> Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2004, fig. 31.16.

<sup>11</sup> Dimopoulou 1999b.

<sup>12</sup> Rethemiotakis – Dimopoulou 2003.



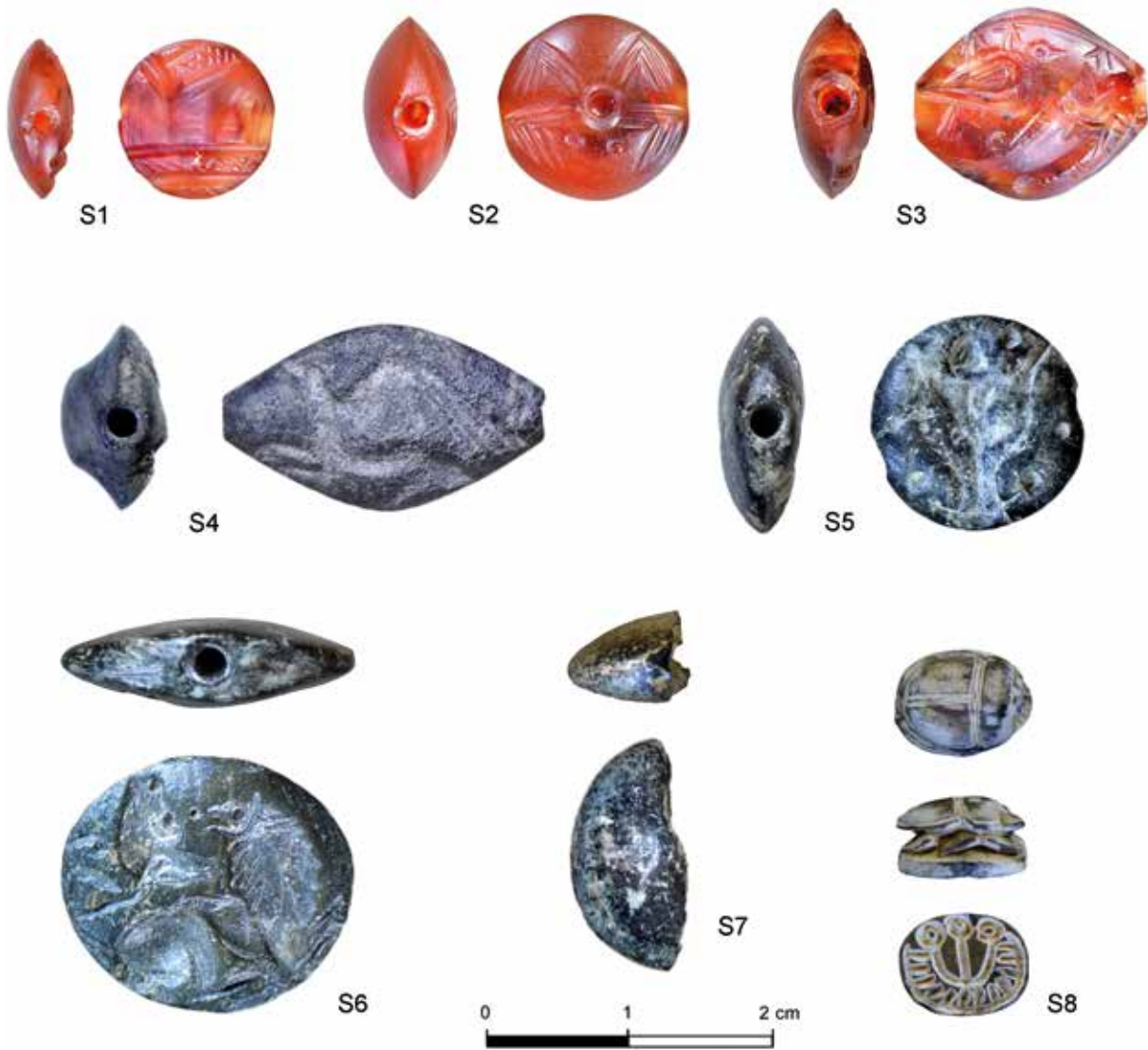


Fig. 1 Poros, Tomb I: Seals S1–S8, faces and profiles (scale ca. 2 : 1)

S1 ▷



tain features of the MM II–III ›architectural‹ group, such as the use of fine cross-hatching and the division of the face into registers by broad bands (Pini 2007; Krzyszkowska 2015b); cf. here S24. S25. S30. S32–S34. But the curving bands are reminiscent of the simpler ›spray‹ motifs of the ›talismatic‹ style (DtS 35–44. 222–227 pls. XIV–XVII). The lentoid shape also points to an early Neopalatial date. See also Table 1 and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. I, Deposit layer 6, MM III–LM I

The fill of the deposit comprised MM III–LM I pottery of various stylistic phases in mixed layers without clear stratigraphy, including MM IIIA–IIIB and LM IA vases and a few LM IB sherds. Layer 6

contained among others MM III and LM I straight-sided and hemispherical cups, monochrome and with reed decoration. In the overlying layer 5, MM IIIB and LM IA jugs and cups with black paint, spirals, ripple ware and floral decoration were found together with typical MM IIIA white-dotted ridged cups. The mixed fill suggests a single deposition event by the end of LM I, containing much earlier material.

**S2** Lentoid (HM 3228)

fig. 1

Plump biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Condition excellent apart from minimal pitting at the string-holes. Dm 1.3 cm, Th 0.7 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, bright fiery orange-red; translucent apart from a darker patch near centre of the seal face.

*Motif:* a spider in the ›talismanic‹ style; body comprising one large central dot; beneath, one solid dot and one hollow dot form the eyes. Twelve legs, disposed in four roughly symmetrical pairs of three, each set of three in a triangular arrangement.

*Commentary and comparanda:* clearly ›talismanic‹ style on the basis of technique and comparanda, but the composition entirely lacks filling motifs, such as ›sprays‹, typical of the style. Representations of spiders are not especially common in the ›talismanic‹ style (DtS 79–81. 243 pl. XXIX). The total has now reached a mere 14 examples, of which 10 are lentoids, three are amygdaloids and one a three-sided prism with amygdaloid faces: CMS I no. 464; CMS III nos. 289–292; CMS V no. 579 (Kazarma tholos, LH I–II); CMS VS1A no. 187 (Nerokourou villa, MM III–LM I); CMS VS3 no. 109 (Chania, LM IIIA–B chamber tomb); CMS VI nos. 226. 227; CMS VII no. 234; CMS VIII no. 70c; CMS X no. 284; CMS XII no. 148. None of the representations provides an especially close parallel for **S2**, where the insect's body is rendered as a single large solid dot, whereas in life spiders have two fused body segments (e.g. shown in CMS V no. 579). In life spiders have eight legs, as correctly depicted on certain seals; but 12 legs are shown on **S2** (cf. CMS X no. 284) and up to 15 are attested in the ›talismanic‹ style.

It is worth noting that all ›talismanic‹ seals depicting spiders are made of carnelian, although there is considerable variation in the hues and features of the stones. CMS VII no. 234, published as ›agate‹, is a pale yellowish-orange stone with cloudy patches, while CMS XII no. 148, published as ›sard‹, is a brownish-orange translucent stone with fine veining; today both would be classed as carnelian.

Further seals of the ›talismanic‹ style presented here are: **S3**. **S9**. **S10**. **S26**. **S27**. **S35–S37**; see also *Table 1* and *Discussion*, below. For examples from Poros Tomb II–1967: Muhly 1992, 100. 140–142 pls. 32.



S2

33, nos. 300. 302. 303; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVb (colour).

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. I, Deposit, layers 5. 6. MM III–LM I  
For layers 5. 6 see above **S1**.

*Bibliography:* Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2004, 368. 373 fig. 31.21.

**S3** Amygdaloid (HM 3226)

fig. 1

Biconvex with flattened ends; string-hole horizontal. Right string-hole badly chipped, from where a long irregular crack runs along the entire edge and continues to the upper portion of the reverse; two small depressions on the reverse are worn or worked smooth; condition of the seal face excellent. L 1.61 cm, W 1.35 cm, Th 0.060 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, translucent; fiery orange-red with pale yellow to deep blood-red banding especially noticeable on reverse.

*Motif:* a water bird and a fish in the ›talismanic‹ style. Above: a long-necked water bird in left profile, with pointed beak and eye (or head) rendered by a solid dot within a circle. The wing is held close to the body, delineated by a strong contour line; three parallel lines within indicate rows of feathers; three vertical lines beneath represent tail feathers; a pair of angled lines depict legs and / or feet. Beneath the bird, a large open-mouthed fish in left profile; mouth and gills are rendered with strong contour lines; the eye by a solid dot within a circle. Above the back of the fish is a comb-like feature, conceivably intended to represent fins; the tail is fan-shaped. Above the bird and below the fish are long curving lines which echo the outline of the seal face; from



S3

these spring typical ›talismatic‹ sprays. Above and below the fish large are solid dots.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the juxtaposition of a water bird and fish is rare. Closest in concept, though not in style and composition is CMS III no. 495 (carnelian lentoid, without provenance). Note also: CMS II.8 no. 160 (seal impressions of hard stone amygdaloid, Knossos) depicting a pair of dolphins *tête-bêche*; between them a standing water bird in profile with raised wings and a jellyfish (?). Cf. also CMS VI no. 257 (bifacial amygdaloid: a) fish; b) owl; ›talismatic‹ style). Much more distant are: CMS II.4 nos. 13. 155 and CMS VS1A no. 167 (seal impressions, Chania Katrestraße 10).

Individually birds and fish are relatively common in the ›talismatic‹ style, although most of the birds classed by Onassoglou (DtS 138–154. 268–277 pls. L–LV) are better seen as Cut Style (Krzyszowska 2022b, esp. 88–90. 92 f.). The closest parallel for the pose and rendering of the bird on S3 occurs on CMS VII no. 44 (but cf. also CMS V no. 238 and CMS VI no. 257b). For fish in the ›talismatic‹ style: DtS 154–163. 277–287 pls. LVI–LXII; distant parallels for the rendering on S3 include CMS IS no. 121; CMS II.3 nos. 49 (Knossos, Gypsades; LM IIIB chamber tomb), 245 (Sphoungaras, MM III–LM I); CMS III no. 332; CMS IV no. 176; CMS VS1B no. 300 (Armenoi, LM IIIA2–B1 chamber tomb); CMS VI no. 254. The identification of individual varieties of fish is not easily made, especially in the ›talismatic‹ style: Gill 1985, 69–73.

Further seals of the ›talismatic‹ style presented here are: S2. S9. S10. S26. S27. S35–S37; see also Table 1 and Discussion, below. For examples from Poros Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100. 140–142

pls. 32. 33 nos. 300. 302. 303; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb (colour).

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. I, Chamber A, grid H2+H3, layer 2. LM I? Chamber A was found empty due to cleaning and looting: there were no remains of burials, pottery, or other finds. Its burial content was probably amassed into the pit deposit making up a rich MM III–LM I fill. However, at the find spot of S3, by the wall of the chamber, were found numerous beads: twelve of gold having various shapes, one of crystal, seven spherical of amethyst and several of glass that escaped looting. These suggest a LM I dating.

#### S4 Amygdaloid (HM 3229)

fig. 1

Convex face and faceted reverse; flattened ends; string-hole horizontal. Seal face rather corroded and porous especially in engraving; superficial scratching on reverse; slight cracking and wear at the right string-hole.

L 2.15 cm, W 1.3 cm, Th 0.75 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* glass, opaque; predominantly deep midnight blue, although grey in engraving where surface is porous; minute pale blue iridescent particles found on better-preserved portions of the seal face; reverse retains the deep blue colour throughout.

*Motif:* a recumbent griffin in right profile; the wing is raised and displayed behind: five broad feathers can be discerned. The forelegs are stretched out in front and terminate in two-pronged claws; the rendering of the hind-legs, placed beneath the belly, is now obscured through corrosion. This also obliterates most internal details, but the creature's body appears to be well modelled. A curving line at the extreme left, behind the feathers, may indicate the end of the griffin's tail.

*Commentary and comparanda:* about 15% of hard stone amygdaloids are furnished with faceted backs; virtually all are datable stylistically to

S4





LB I–II. Griffins become relatively common in seal iconography from LM I onwards, and indeed are by far the most common of the hybrid creatures, with more than 200 examples, attested in metal, hard and soft stone (Krzyszkowska 2021, 239. 243 pl. LVa). But hitherto only one or two examples have been reported in vitreous materials: CMS VI no. 387 (DICTAEAN CAVE) and perhaps CMS V no. 583 (KAZARMA THOLOS, LH I–II). Poses vary enormously and include frontal and profile (standing or recumbent) views, with either one or both wings displayed; griffins also feature in cult scenes and animal attacks (Krzyszkowska 2021, 239 pl. LVa). There are no especially good parallels for S4, although cf. CMS III no. 508a (three-sided prism with amygdaloid faces) and CMS VS2 no. 32 (amygdaloid with faceted reverse, ELATEIA LH IIIB–C middle chamber tomb). Both are executed in the LM I Cut Style, as are some 35 further griffins (Krzyszkowska 2022a; and below S19). Unfortunately the condition of S4 precludes a meaningful assessment of stylistic features; for dating see Discussion, below.

Further glass seals presented here are: S10. S11. S15. S21. S34 (?). S37. S40. Note also HM 2348 from Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100 pl. 33 no. 304; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491, pl. CLXXVIIb (colour). For further LM I ›naturalistic‹ motifs see Table 1; for material and dating see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. I, Chamber B, Antechamber, grid E7, layer 3. Mixed LM I–LM III

As described above (Excavation and Contents), Chamber B was much disturbed, while in the adjacent antechamber debris of rubbish and sewage had accumulated. At the nearby find spot of S5 were found a very few scattered sherds, among them LM IB and LM III. In layer 1 a lentoid bead was found.

S5 Lentoid (HM 3231)

fig. 1

String-hole slightly diagonal to horizontal axis. Edges somewhat battered; abraded at the string-holes; some pitting and slight cracking on the reverse.

L 1.45 cm, W 1.5 cm, Th 0.55 cm, SHs 0.25 cm.

*Material:* serpentine, dark blue-black with a few pale beige inclusions; grey in engraving.

*Motif:* boar's head depicted frontally; surrounding it in the field six solid dots. The rendering is rather schematic, but the contour of the head with elongated snout and the protruding tusks identify the animal beyond doubt.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the motif on S5 is exceptionally rare in Aegean glyptic. A boar's head rendered frontally, juxtaposed with animal heads in profile, is known from impressions of a hard stone lentoid at Agia Triada (CMS II.6 no. 92; LM IB) and another is found on an unusual bifacial lentoid of



S5

haematite in Oxford (CMS VI no. 454a; on the basis of face b, datable stylistically to LM I–II). Some of the fantasy creatures on sealings from Zakros House A (LM IB) incorporate boars' heads or parts thereof (e.g. CMS II.7 nos. 191. 201. 202). By contrast heads of rams and / or bulls rendered frontally are relatively common, especially in MM II (Anastasiadou 2011, 209–211 pls. 39–43, motifs 76–79) but continuing into LM I and well beyond, especially in soft stones (e.g. CMS II.3 no. 149, Malia; CMS II.6 nos. 163. 164; seal impressions, Agia Triada, LM IB). However, pigs and wild boar (the distinction is not always easy) are generally less well represented in the glyptic repertoire than other animals (Krzyszkowska 2014, 344). Worth noting is the boar's head, rendered frontally on the spear from Archanes: Y. and E. Sakellarakis 1997, II, 596–598 figs. 621. 622.

For further LM I soft stone seals here, see Table 1 and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. I, Deposit, layers 3. 4. MM III–LM I

Layers 3 and 4 of the deposit fill comprised stylistically diverse pottery, ranging from MM III phases to LM I: there are MM III black-painted short-necked jugs and straight-sided cups, a hemispherical cup with polychrome decoration etc. Among LM I (mostly LM IA) pieces are hemispherical cups with dark-on-light floral decoration with ivy leaves, ripple ware, spirals, Vapheio-type cups with spirals, a pyxis-strainer etc. Cf. underlying layer 5 (S1).

S6 Lentoid (HM 3227)

fig. 1

Biconvex, but rather flat; string-hole vertical. Condition good: engraving crisp, although not quite





S6

workshop fresh; very slight damage on reverse near lower string-hole.

L 1.95 cm, W 1.75 cm, Th 0.055 cm, SHs 0.20–0.25 cm.  
*Material:* serpentine, dark olive-green to grey with light green inclusions especially on reverse; some foliation.

*Motif:* a so-called Chimaera composition involving a recumbent lion in left profile with back-turned head; behind in right profile the back, upturned head and forelegs of a bull. The lion is rendered with exceptional care: the large bushy mane indicated by a series of short diagonal lines on either side of the neck; by contrast the head, set off from the mane by a curved line, is treated in summary fashion by a single solid dot; the mouth is open and a smaller dot marks the muzzle. The back, rump and belly are delineated by contour lines; three legs are shown, terminating in short prong-like claws; the tail is rendered by a short, slightly curving line. The back of the bull is treated in a cursory manner in contrast to the large upturned head; the open mouth indicating that the animal is bellowing in pain. The eye is rendered as a solid dot within a semi-circle; a smaller dot marks the muzzle; two rather irregular lines indicate the splayed forelegs. A small hook-shaped element in front of the bull may be a filling ornament.

*Commentary and comparanda:* an extremely fine example of a ›Chimaera‹ composition, which should be construed as an abbreviated attack scene. Ordinarily the animal in the forefront is a lion with back-turned head, as on S6, while the creature behind is a wild goat, bull, deer or even griffin. The composition occurs in both hard and soft stones, beginning in LM I. See discussion by Pini (1995, 198 f. fig. 5;

note that among the hard stone examples listed in his n. 21, the provenance of HM 2085 is wrongly given as Royal Road; in reality the seal is a stray find from Skalani). Soft stone examples include: CMS II.4 no. 79; CMS III nos. 408. 409; CMS IV no. 276; CMS V no. 222; CMS VII nos. 197. 198; CMS X no. 153; CMS XI nos. 50. 222; HM 2199 and 2397. The size of S6 is noteworthy (but cf. also CMS III no. 409, different in style, but also outsized and bearing a lion and bull). Dating of the ›Chimaera‹ group in soft stone depends largely on comparisons with LM I depictions of lions (alone or *tête-bêche*): see generally Pini 1995.

For further LM I soft stone seals here, see *Table 1* and *Discussion*, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. I, Chamber B, grid E5, layer 2, floor. Mixed LM I–LM III

The contents of the Chamber were much disturbed: no pottery was discovered at the find spot, apart from scattered LM I–LM III sherds that were collected all around S6. Among them two belong to exceptional LM IB vases: the fine Marine Style ewer and the crocuses cup. At the same spot an agate cylindrical bead and another of green glass were found, but their connection to the same burial as S6 is dubious.

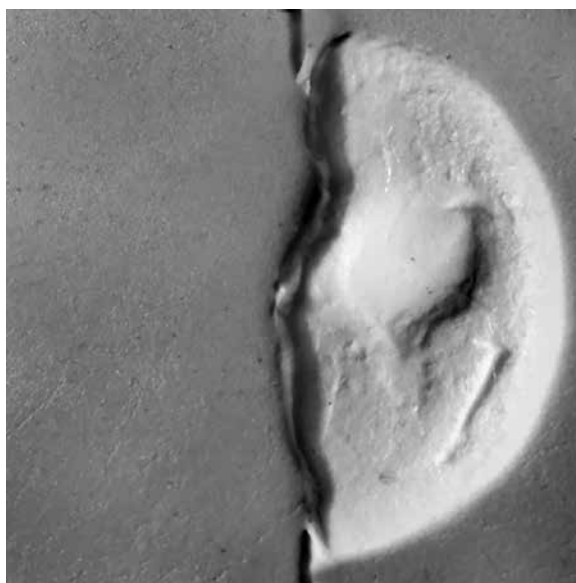
#### S7 Lentoid (HM 3233)

*fig. 1*

Biconvex; string-hole vertical. Broken along the string-hole; battered and much surface pitting; engraving abraded.

L max. pres. 0.85 cm, W max. 1.6 cm, Th 0.55 cm, SH (estimated) 0.25 cm.

S7



*Material:* soft stone, dark charcoal-grey; lighter in engraving; rather coarse granular structure suggests the material could be chlorite rather than serpentine.

*Motif:* a quadruped to the right; hindquarters only preserved. The short tail suggests a goat rather than a bull.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the abraded engraving and fragmentary condition hamper judgements. However, it is worth observing that in LM I soft stone glyptic running goats are the norm, whereas in LM III they tend to stand; see Müller 1995, 163–167. The position of the hind-leg on **S7** is consistent with a running pose; taking into account hindquarters and tail, comparanda include: CMS II.3 no. 90; CMS II.4 nos. 44. 88; CMS III nos. 448. 453; CMS VS1A no. 343; CMS IX no. 121; CMS XII nos. 267. 274. 275.

For further LM I soft stone seals here, see *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. I, Antechamber, grid Z9, layers 1. 2. Mixed LM I–LM III and later

The find spot close to the breached entrance was very disturbed. The debris contained mixed finds: a modern plate, two LM IB sherds of the Marine Style ewer and the crocuses cup (for which see **S6**), a fragmentary loom weight, other LM IA sherds and conical cups, mostly LM III.

**S8** Scarab (HM 3225)

*fig. 1*

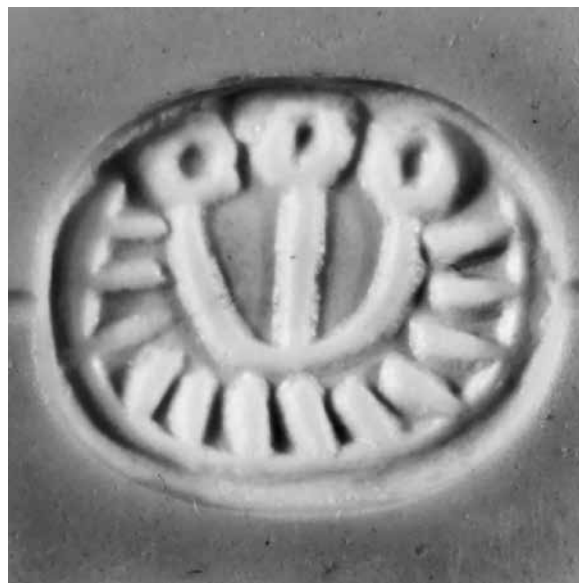
String-hole longitudinal. Very slightly abraded, otherwise intact.

L 0.88 cm, W 0.52 cm, Th 0.70 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* glazed steatite, probably hardened by exposure to heat; milky-white to greyish-white with darker grey patches; dark grey on the flat surface of the face. In the engraving and in carved surfaces of the profiles creamy-yellow to brownish-yellow, evidently remains of the glaze.

*Motif:* motif set at right angles to longitudinal axis.

*Commentary and comparanda:* »the face design is a strange variation on the *nb-ty* design, which ap-



S8

pears early in the Middle Kingdom; the lunate head, leg junction in front of pronotum-elytrum junction suggest an early Middle Kingdom / late Dynasty XI date; but the height to length ratio is rather high; note also double T-lines; some fringing; large string hole« (J. Phillips).

Further scarabs presented here are: **S23** and **S39**. Note also the Egyptian scarab (HM 3267) found in a settlement context at Poros: Dimopoulou 2000a, 28 fig. 1.1: Phillips 2008, II, 236. 362 no. 483.

*Stylistic date:* »probably late First Intermediate Period to early Middle Kingdom, sometime in Dynasty XI« (J. Phillips)

*Context:* T. I, Chamber B, grid Δ7, layer 3, floor. Mixed LM I–LM III

The find spot was very disturbed with a few mixed finds, mainly sherds and a few beads, among them a lentoid of carnelian and two or three sherds from two LM IB vases, the Marine Style ewer and the crocuses cup (for which see **S6**). Cf. **S4**, adjacent grid E7.

## II. TOMB IN THE TSILIMBARIS PLOT, POSEIDONOS STREET (1993–1994)

### Excavation and contents

The rock-cut Tomb II<sup>13</sup> was revealed in 1993 during building work in the Tsilimbaris plot on Poseidonos Street. The tomb lies underground, extending almost entirely under the road

<sup>13</sup> Dimopoulou 1994, 708 f. pl. 229α–γ.

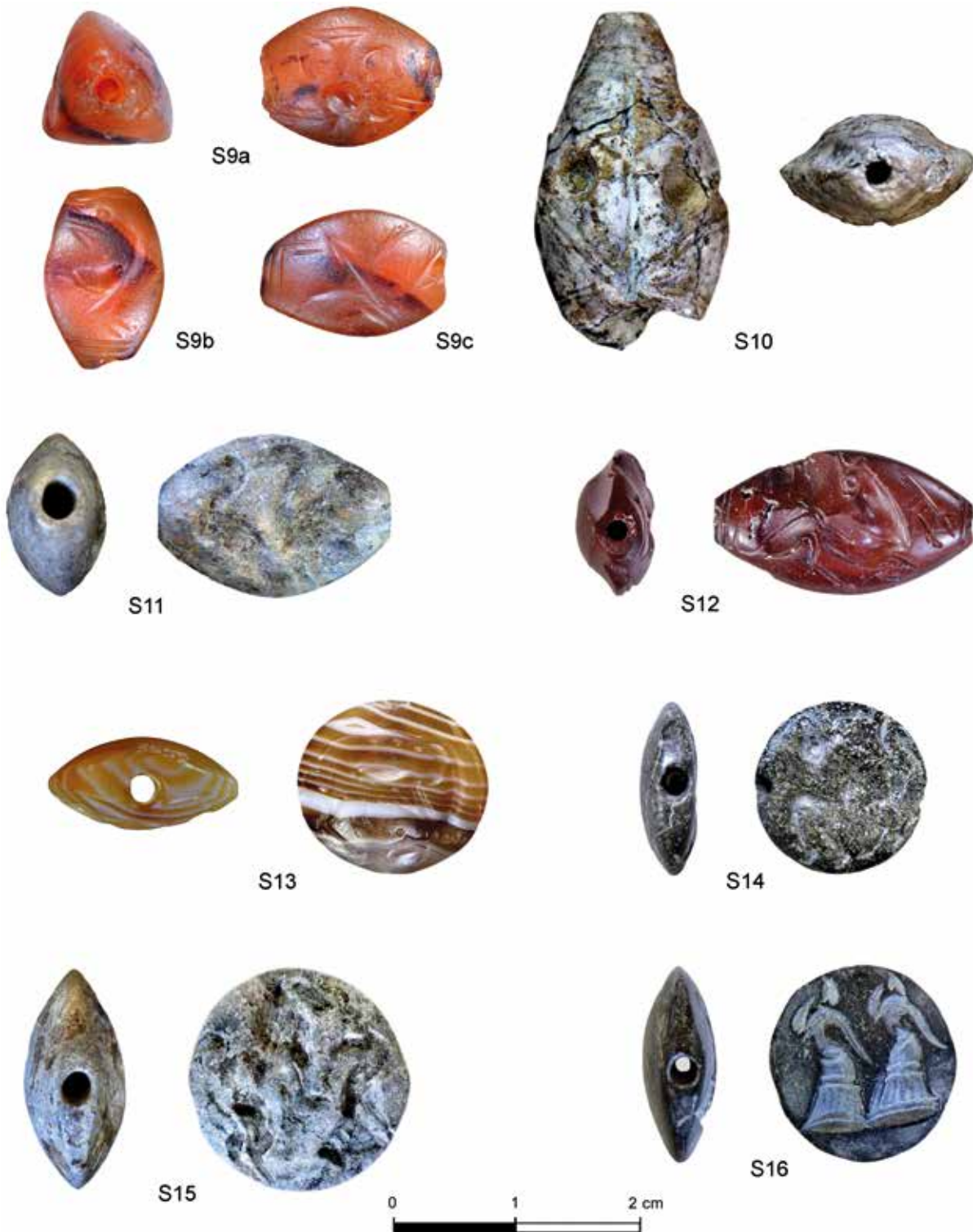


Fig. 2 Poros, Tomb II: Seals S9–S16, faces and profiles (scale ca. 2 : 1)

surface, and is the largest in the group of six tombs, with a total area of approximately 90 m<sup>2</sup> and a similar shape to the others. It consists of two chambers and an antechamber, with rooms on different levels with steps and dividing walls. In the central area between the antechamber and chamber is a large pit, not particularly deep as in the other tombs, delimited by rough low walls, which functioned as a deposit for the remains of older burials. A pillar and a half-pillar cut out of the rock ensured the stability of the roof, 2 m high. An inclined



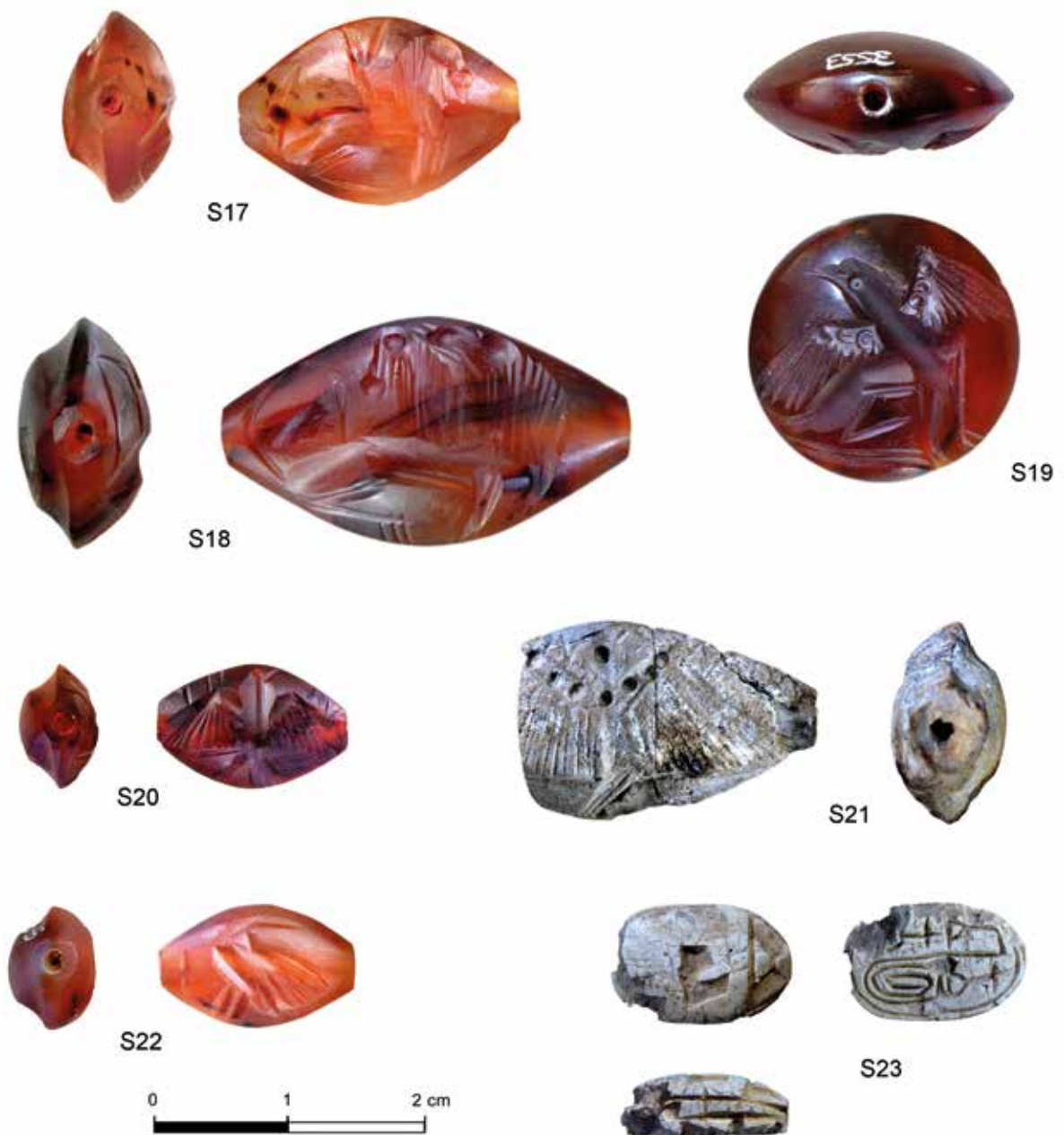


Fig. 3 Poros, Tomb II: Seals S17–S23, faces and profiles (scale ca. 2 : 1)

dromos led to the entrance, which was blocked with stones and found breached. The tomb was looted in the Postpalatial period, when the antechamber was used as a dump for household rubbish, and again in modern times when the tomb was discovered by looters during the construction of an adjacent building in the early 1970s.

The dozens of burials in the chambers and the contents of the deposit were disturbed and scattered by the looters, so only a few pieces of skeletons remained in situ. However, the looters missed hundreds of significant small finds. Apart from the 14 seals S9–S22 and the scarab S23 presented here, there were also an undecorated gold ring; gold, silver, bronze and lead earrings; pins of silver, bronze and ivory; and beads of necklaces made of gold, semi-precious stones, glass and faience. There were also small ivory objects, such as the head of a figurine, a broken comb and part of a relief scene, a faience miniature cup and a small decorative figure-of-eight shield.

Although bronze finds are generally rare in the Poros tombs, being the main target of looters, a few interesting objects and fragments were found indicating ›warrior burials‹, inhumations of elite individuals accompanied by weapons and bronze vessels in the LM I period. At least two heavily disturbed burials are associated with a bronze dagger, a sword or dagger hilt with silver studs, spearheads, sword blades and fragments of bronze vessels. Together with these was found a set of pierced boars' tusks, obviously from a helmet. There was also a razor, knives, tweezers, and staples and nails from the wooden funerary beds and biers.

In the large communal tombs of Poros with their dozens of burials, inhumations of elite persons were distinguished from the rest by various funerary practices<sup>14</sup>. They were usually marked out by the symbols of status, rank, office or quality that accompanied the deceased, such as the weapons and helmets of the ›warrior burials‹ and the elaborate funerary goods, such as precious ornaments, valuable seals and even luxury vessels, in the burials of higher-status individuals. Another way of highlighting the importance of the deceased was by the addition of special arrangements or structures inside the tomb. In the first chamber of Tomb II were found fragments of fine plaster, some with a rim, triangular in section and preserving traces of colour, which probably came from the covering of a wooden coffin or simply delimited a burial on the floor of the tomb itself. In the inner chamber were the remains of a particularly interesting structure, unfortunately destroyed by the looters: an extensive pile of bricks with impressions of wooden timbers, which probably formed a kind of raised platform for the deposition of the illustrious dead. Among and around the bricks were bones and remains of rich burials such as ornaments, seals and the remains of a ›warrior burial‹.

The pottery from the tomb is yet another indication of the extent to which it was looted, particularly in modern times, as the finds are far fewer and of poorer quality than in the rich ceramics of the other Poros tombs. There are about 90 vases, mostly undecorated cups. These do, however, define the main period of use as the Neopalatial era (MM III–LM I). Postpalatial sherds (LM IIIA2–B) from the entrance area and antechamber are household rubbish not connected to later funerary use.

## Catalogue

### S9 Three-sided prism (HM 3544)

fig. 2

Amygdaloid faces; convex. Somewhat battered; engraved abraded; surface of the stone pitted; damaged at ends with chipping at string-holes.

L max. pres. 1.5 cm, W (a) 1.2 cm, (b) 1.0 cm, (c) 1.0 cm, SH 0.20 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, fairly uniform fiery orange; mostly translucent with a dark purplish-black vein running within and a few other dark flecks.

*Motifs:* face (a) one-handled jug in the ›talismatic‹ style: roughly triangular base and neck between which a large solid dot forms the body of the vessel; S-curved handle; a single curving line indicates the spout. In the lower part of the field, either side of the jug, two sets of slightly diagonal lines; at the left end a spray motif. Face (b) a long-necked water bird with head turned back over a triple ground-

line; the body is formed by a deep roughly elliptical cut; three short tail feathers are shown; a pair of long, angled lines indicate the legs; the eye / head is depicted by a large circle, beyond which is an elongated beak. In the field beneath three diagonal lines (two joining at an angle) perhaps an abbreviated ›spray‹ motif. Face (c) set diagonally across the field an arrow or dart with triangular point; near its base a pair of short parallel lines; from its ›shaft‹ springs a long curving groove with notched end, resembling a leaf or blade of grass. At the left two plant ›sprays‹; at the right, conceivably indicating a built structure, a pair of vertical lines set at right angles to a pair of horizontal lines; between the latter extremely faint diagonal strokes.

*Commentary and comparanda:* in a repertoire of some 900 ›talismatic‹ seals, only about 35 are three-sided prisms with amygdaloid faces, generally made of

<sup>14</sup> Dimopoulou 1999a.



S9a



S9b



S9c

hard stone. In a clear majority of cases all three faces are engraved, as is S9, though no discernible pattern emerges regarding the juxtaposition of motifs. The shape all but vanishes once ›talismanic‹ output had ceased; three examples occur in the Cut Style (CMS II.3 no. 254; CMS III no. 508; CMS X no. 277).

Face (a) provides a typical example of the ›talismanic‹ jug motif (›Kanne‹) well documented by Onassoglou (DtS 12–22. 209–216, pls. V–IX). Most of the 80 examples considered by her are hard stone amygdaloids, although lentoids and occasionally cushions occur. In addition to S9, ›talismanic‹ jugs occur on nine three-sided prisms, ordinarily having amygdaloid faces and almost exclusively made of carnelian: CMS II.3 no. 203b; CMS III no. 347c; CMS VI nos. 193a. 258b; CMS IX nos. 89a. 92a; CMS X nos. 110a. 229b; CMS XII no. 163a.

There are no close parallels for the long-necked water bird on face (b) where avian features are pared back to a minimum. However, the bird with up-raised wing on CMS IS no. 119 shows somewhat similar treatment of neck, eye and elongated beak; lush ›sprays‹ mark this clearly as belonging to the ›talismanic‹ style. Other ›talismanic‹ birds with eyes rendered as circles include: CMS IV 244; CMS V no. 238; CMS VII no. 44 (but these otherwise diverge considerably from S9). Note that among the 91 birds classed as ›talismanic‹ by Onassoglou (DtS 138–154. 268–277 pls. L–LV) most are in reality Cut Style (Krzyszkowska 2022b, esp. 88–90. 92. 93). Note also that currently in the CMS online a search for ›talismanic‹ birds, brings some engraved in the Cut Style, along with ›talismanic‹ flying fish.

The motif on face (c) of S9 is wholly unparalleled in the glyptic repertoire and not easy to understand. No other seal depicts an arrow or dart as the principal element, although on CMS VIII no. 110b, a three-sided prism of haematite, a feathered arrow appears together with a bow and bearded male head. Otherwise arrows or darts are shown piercing the back or sides of wounded animals. It is, however, just possible that the arrow on S9 is a distant reflection of the common ›arrow‹ sign in Cretan Hieroglyphic (CHIC 049), frequently paired with the ›trowel‹ (CHIC 044). On seals the shaft is often scarcely longer than the two lines forming the triangular point (e.g. CHIC p. 407 #211α), although occasionally the shaft is more elongated (e.g. CHIC p. 407 #256γ; #294α) and long shafts also occur when the sign appears in clay documents (e.g. CHIC p. 406 #89 α). Further seals of the ›talismanic‹ style presented here are: S2. S3. S10. S26. S27. S35–S37; see also Table 1 and Discussion, below. For examples from Poros Tomb II–1967: Muhly 1992, 100. 140–142 pls. 32. 33 nos. 300. 302. 303; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb (colour).

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. II, Chamber B, grid H4, layer 1. LM I



**S9** as well as **S19** and **S22** accompanied a disturbed rich burial along the west wall of the Chamber, unfortunately without pottery, except for two cups, in themselves not very diagnostic: one conical, the other a LM I ogival. Such cups in burial contexts are hardly diagnostic in terms of accurate dating (cf. Muhly 1992, 116). Some scholars examining stratigraphies in residential contexts define some typological differences as in wall thickness and base diameter between LM IA and LM IB specimens (Andreadaki-Vlazaki 2011, 59 f. figs. 6–9; Rethemiotakis – Christakis 2011, 205–227 figs. 4–7. 20–23). Others, however, do not discern significant differentiations when comparing stratified examples from both LM I phases (Hood 2011, 157–159 figs. 7. 8).

**S22** was found under the arm. **S19** was found with a bone ring, a gold bead and a bone comb with two rows of incised spirals. Tiny gold beads in the shape of an incurved altar were among the vertebrae. More beads of glass, carnelian and faience, fragments of a silver pin and of tweezers were found around and among the skeleton's bones. In spite of disturbance and the absence of much characteristic pottery, the finds suggest a (mature) LM I horizon.

**S10** Amygdaloid (HM 3555)

fig. 2

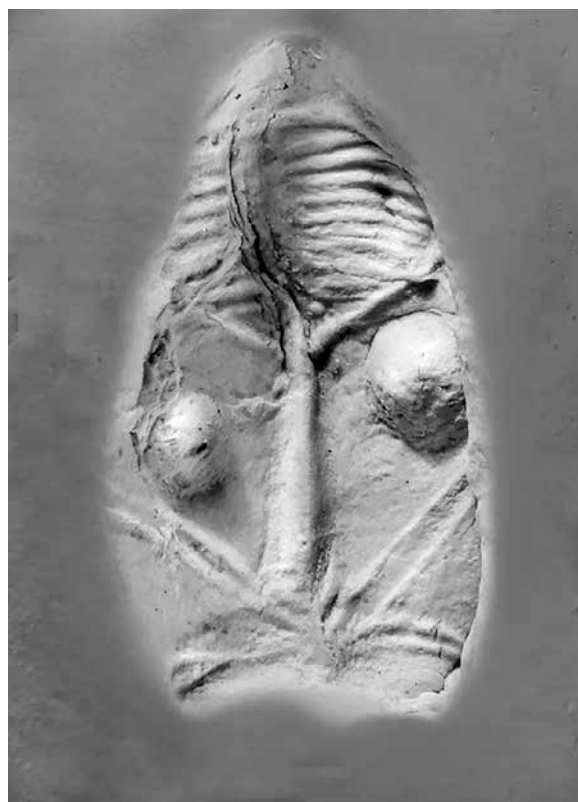
Convex face and faceted reverse; flattened ends; string-hole vertical. Restored from numerous fragments; lower portion (ca. 20%) missing; badly battered especially on edges; friable at break; brownish-yellow surface deposit in engraving and at faceted reverse.

H max. pres. 2.75 cm, W max. pres. 1.6 cm, Th 0.9 cm, SH 0.20 cm.

*Material:* glass, opaque; greyish-white on seal face, light blue-grey on reverse with some iridescent patches.

*Motif:* papyrus motif in the ›talismanic‹ style. The motif is oriented vertically: a stylized papyrus plant with tall stem, terminating in a fan-like ›leaf cluster‹ indicated by horizontal lines either side of the stem. Beneath the ›leaf cluster‹ a pair of large solid dots; pairs of diagonal and curving lines below.

*Commentary and comparanda:* Onassoglou (DtS 48–56. 229–231. 304 pl. XX) has discussed the motif in detail and convincingly disproved the identification of the motif as a ›lion's mask‹, advocated by Evans and others (DtS 49–52). The motif occurs principally on amygdaloids with faceted backs made of hard stone (especially carnelian and haematite), although serpentine and chlorite are also represented. To date no published examples have been identified as glass. Examples include: CMS II.3 nos. 12a. 80. 253 (Mochlos above T. IX, LM I); CMS III nos. 273–275; CMS IV no. 180 (much decayed, ›agate‹); CMS V no. 307a; CMS VS1A no. 116 (Chania-Kas-



S10

telli, LM IB); nos. 181. 182 (impressions on roundels, Chania Katrestraße); nos. 193. 194 (Phylaki Apokoronou, LM IIIA–B tholos); CMS VI nos. 211–213; British Museum Greece and Rome 1895,0518.11 (formerly Egyptian Antiquities 23161).

**S10** represents the only certain example of the ›talismanic‹ style made of glass (CMS VI no. 251 is better seen as Cut Style). Further glass seals presented here are: **S4. S12. S13. S21. S34** (?). **S37. S40**. Note also HM 2348 from Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100 pl. 33 no. 304; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb (colour). For the material see Discussion, below.

Further seals of the ›talismanic‹ style presented here are: **S2. S3. S9. S26. S27. S35–37**; see also *Table 1* and Discussion, below. For examples from Poros Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100. 140–142 pls. 32. 33 nos. 300. 302. 303; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb (colour).

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I for the motif; the faceted back points rather to LM I

*Context:* T. II, Deposit south of Chamber B, grid Z11, layer 1. MM III–LM I

The Deposit was much looted, mixed up with discarded dirt, with many sherds of various stylistic phases, mainly MM III and LM I, e.g. LM IA ripple ware, MM III white-dotted cups etc.



S11

**S11** Amygdaloid (HM 3546)

fig. 2

Biconvex with flattened ends; string-hole horizontal. Seal face somewhat corroded and porous, with remains of deposit especially in engraving; edges slightly battered, but otherwise intact.

L 1.85 cm, W 1.3 cm, Th 0.80 cm, SHs 0.20–0.25 cm.

*Material:* glass, opaque; pale greyish-blue with some beige patches; on reverse milky blue-grey with a network of extremely fine dark blue ›veins‹ in places and dark blue flecks; some iridescence.

*Motif:* a pair of long-necked water birds in right profile. The bird on the right holds its wing close to the body; its head seems to be formed by a solid dot; faint traces of a short beak remain; no feet are shown. The bird on the left displays a wing behind, rendered as a single angled line; beneath this are faint horizontal lines presumably indicating rows of feathers; the head is a solid dot; two feet are shown. At the far right, faint traces of what may have been a plant motif.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the condition hampers evaluation of stylistic details; however similar compositions involving two or three long-necked water birds, sometimes in landscape settings, are attested in both hard and soft stone during MM III–LM I (Krzyszkowska 2010b, 175 f.). Examples on amygdaloids include: CMS II.3 nos. 351. 352 (metal alloy), no. 353 (distant); CMS II.6 no. 120 (seal impression, Agia Triada, LM IB); CMS IV no. 246; CMS VS1A no. 189 (Phylaki Apokoronou, LM IIIA–B tholos); CMS X no. 224. Note also the serpentine cushion (CMS II.3 no. 42) from a LM IA context at Vathypetro and the lentoid (CMS II.3 no. 78) from a LM I–II context at Knossos Gypsades, which may be glass. Further glass seals presented here are: **S4. S10. S15. S21. S34 (?)**. **S37. S40.** Note also HM 2348 from Tomb II–1967: Muhly 1992, 100 pl. 33 no. 304; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIb (colour). For further MM III–LM I seals with ›naturalistic‹ motifs

see *Table 1*; for the material and dating see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. II, Chamber B, grid Δ7, layer 2. LM I

A disturbed find spot, where a fragmentary LM I cup with floral decoration was found, along with fragments of bronze knives, boars' tusks, tweezers etc., all remains of elite burials originally placed on the demolished mud brick platform.

**S12** Amygdaloid (HM 3547)

fig. 2

Convex face and faceted reverse; flattened ends; three deep parallel grooves on lower edge of seal; string-hole horizontal. Portion of seal face broken away (conchoidal fracture typical of jasper); similar fracturing beneath left string-hole and on lower edge; damage at rump and tail of bull; much superficial pitting on seal face.

L 2.1 cm, W 1.2 cm, Th 0.65 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* jasper, opaque; deep red with a few very fine irregular veins and tiny white inclusions.

*Motif:* a running or recumbent bull in left profile, with head turned upwards. The body and elongated neck are well modelled; the belly and outer edge of the neck delineated by fine contour lines. The eye is rendered by a solid dot; a smaller dot marks the lower end of the jaw. The mouth is wide open, as if the animal is bellowing in pain; a short line indicates the tongue. The far foreleg is shown bent; the near leg seems to curl awkwardly beneath the belly. The hind-legs are rendered by double wavy lines terminating in a solid dot; one stretches out beneath the belly, the other crosses the animal's side. The long curving tail is held erect. In front of the bull a diagonal line with diamond-shaped end evidently indicates an arrow or dart. At each end the composition is framed by a pair of vertical lines.

*Commentary and comparanda:* several comparable representations of a wounded bull exist. Closest are

S12





examples known from seal impressions at LM IB Chania: CMS VS1A nos. 153 (hard stone lentoid) and 154 (a metal signet ring). In the latter, the unusual positioning of the near hind-leg is clarified, since the bull is evidently attempting to dislodge the arrow which has pierced its side. This also provides a good parallel for the way neck, head and near foreleg are set on **S12** (though internal details differ). CMS VS1A no. 153 shows the bull's tongue in the open mouth as on **S12**. More distant parallels for the pose are: CMS II.4 no. 153 and CMS VI no. 404 (both without darts); also CMS VII no. 105.

For further LM I ›naturalistic‹ motifs in hard stone see *Table 1*; for dating see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. II, Chamber B, mud brick burial platform. LM I?

The find spot lacked pottery. The seal was found touching the side of a mud brick, which had belonged to the destroyed burial platform. Remains of disturbed burials were all around the find spot, most probably suggesting a LM I environment. Cf. **S11**.



S13

**S13** Lentoid (HM 3552)

*fig. 2*

Plump biconvex; string-hole vertical. Some chipping around upper string-hole; very slight pitting in places; slight scratching on reverse; otherwise condition very good.

L 1.55 cm, W 1.35 cm, Th 0.75 cm, SHs 0.25 cm.

*Material:* agate, with opaque white and honey-brown translucent banding; in lower portion translucent and almost colourless.

*Motif:* a male deer in left profile with neck turned sharply downwards; the head (upside down) faces forwards. The body and hind-quarters are well modelled, though the transition to the downward-turned neck is somewhat clumsy. The mouth is open; eye and nose indicated by oval dots; the pedicle on top of the head from which the antlers spring is shown by a round dot. A pair of triangles joined at the tip represents the palmate antlers that are characteristic of fallow deer; a short line protruding downwards is the brow tine. The series of oval dots on the neck and back of the animal are also in keeping with the typical spotting or mottling found on the hides of fallow deer, especially in summer months. The fore-legs are bent sharply beneath the animal's belly; the hind-legs are shown in profile. The upper portions are delineated by contour lines, the lower limbs are simple straight lines terminating in solid dots. The tail is rather short and feathery. A long curving line runs vertically in the left of the field.

*Commentary and comparanda:* in the glyptic repertoire representations of deer are considerably less common than those of goats and bulls, but are none the less attested from MM II–LB IIIA (Krzyszko-

ska 2014, esp. 343. 344). During LM I they occur in both hard and soft stone; in some cases hunting scenes are implied with darts piercing the animals' sides (e.g. CMS II.3 no. 74); deer are also attacked by hunting dogs (e.g. CMS I no. 308), lions or griffins. The highly contorted pose on **S13** suggests that a wounded deer is meant here.

For further LM I ›naturalistic‹ motifs in hard stone see *Table 1*; for dating see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. II, Entrance, pile B, layer 1. Mixed MM III–LMI–LM III

A mixed context, with discarded rubbish. In the first layer part of a crucible, a conical cup, fragments of a stone tool and of a bronze blade were found. As also noticed at the entrances of other looted tombs, part of the fill comes from MM III–LM I burials in the tomb and another part is debris from the settlement dating down to LM III.

**S14** Lentoid (HM 3549)

*fig. 2*

Very flat face; string-hole horizontal. Engraving abraded, especially at animal's rump; left string-hole worn to the front; fine irregular cracking on reverse.

Dm 1.3 cm, Th 0.45 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* soft stone, light-brown to charcoal grey; granular structure suggests chlorite.

*Motif:* quadruped in right profile with strongly up-turned head; eye, nose and top of head marked by solid dots; a curved line indicates the horn. The fore-legs are shown by roughly straight legs; the hind-legs by angled lines; the hooves are wedge-shaped.



S14



S15

A roughly vertical line from the animal's rump represents the tail: the length suggests a bovine rather than goat.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the combination of a standing pose and upturned head is not especially common and there are no close parallels for **S14**, but cf. CMS I no. 479; CMS IV no. 317; CMS VS1A no. 71. For further LM I soft stone seals here, see *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I (?)

*Context:* T. II, Entrance, grid H15+Z15, layer 4. MM III–LM I–LM III

The fill of layers 1–4 at the entrance was mixed. The sherds and various small finds range from MM III to LM IB burial remains to LM III sherds such as feet and stems of kylikes and debris from the Minoan settlement, e.g. crucibles and the foot of a cooking pot. **S14** was found on the floor of the second step of the rock-cut ›dromos‹ leading to the entrance of the tomb, amid a very few non-diagnostic sherds.

#### **S15** Lentoid (HM 3543)

*fig. 2*

Biconvex; string-hole slightly diagonal to horizontal axis. Brownish-yellow deposit in upper portion of seal face, especially in engraving; edges somewhat battered especially near string-holes; intact.

Dm 1.8 cm, Th 0.9 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* glass, opaque; pale whitish-grey to pale blue-grey with a few small more definitely bluish patches on the reverse; in places some craquelure and iridescence.

*Motif:* a female figure wearing a flounced skirt faces a large lion in left profile standing on its hind-legs; its muzzle virtually touches the head of the female.

The female appears to be depicted in three-quarter view with one hand near her waist, the other outstretched toward the lion; her head is shown in right profile. Two short curving lines at her shoulder suggest that she is wearing a short-sleeved (?) bodice; on the skirt several sets of inward curving lines echo the hem-line and suggest flounces. The lion is considerably larger than the female and has an outsized pointed muzzle, and solid dot for the eye. The mane is indicated by a series of vertical lines within; and short diagonal strokes along the back of the neck. The hind-legs are carefully engraved; the forelegs by contrast are somewhat clumsy. A long curving tail is held erect.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the representation is unique. Female figures are juxtaposed with single lions on two LM I lentoids found in much later contexts, but in both cases the females are seated in a rocky landscape and the lions are much smaller than they are: CMS II.8 no. 239 (Knossos, seal impression Wooden Staircase and Secretaries' Bureau); CMS V no. 253 (Armenoi T. 24, LM IIIA2–IIIB1 chamber tomb). The rampant pose of the lion is, however, closely paralleled on two lentoids depicting the Mistress of Animals from Mycenae Chamber Tomb 515: CMS I nos. 144, 145 (LB I–II). This suggests that certain LM I representations of a female figure and single animal (chiefly in soft stone) should be construed as depicting the Potnia Theron, or at least serving as forerunners for the slightly later *Bildthe-ma* where the female (or male) figure is flanked by a pair of animals placed antithetically, see: Krzyszkowska 2012a, 743 pl. CLXXVa–b.

Further glass seals presented here are: **S4**. **S10**. **S11**. **S21**. **S34** (?). **S37**. **S40**. Note also HM 2348

from Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100 pl. 33 no. 304; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIb (colour). For further LM I seals with ›naturalistic‹ motifs here, see *Table 1*; for the material and dating see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. II, Chamber B, grid Z7, layer 1, north edge of the mud brick structure. MM III–LM I

Disturbed fill: most of the mixed and scattered sherds of jugs and cups are stylistically LM I (mostly LM IA) and several are MM IIIB, as is pottery from other spots around the demolished mud brick structure.

**S16** Lentoid (HM 3550)

*fig. 2*

Biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Edges very slightly abraded; engraving almost workshop fresh.

L 1.62 cm, W 1.73 cm, Th 0.68 cm, SHs 0.25 cm.

*Material:* serpentine with foliation; dark blue-green, grey in engraving.

*Motif:* two female figures wearing flounced skirts in right profile; each raising one arm toward her face, the other outstretched behind. The skirts comprise two curving lines just below the waist; two broad horizontal lines at roughly knee height, beneath which are five or six broad vertical lines; the hem-line is marked by broad horizontal lines. All vertical and horizontal lines are very slightly curved to produce a sense of fluidity and movement.

*Commentary and comparanda:* an exceptionally fine example of a well-known LM I *Bildthema* ordinarily occurring on soft stone lentoids, involving two female figures, apparently in procession, each raising an arm in a ›gesture of adoration‹. Examples include: CMS II.3 nos. 17 (Knossos House of Frescoes, LM I), 169. 236; CMS VI nos. 287–289; CMS XI no. 282; CMS XII no. 168. The impression of a LM I soft stone cushion (CMS II.8 no. 266; Knossos Archives Deposit) shows three female figures. A similar pose is also adopted by single female figures on several LM I soft stone lentoids: CMS II.3 no. 304; CMS III nos. 351. 352; CMS VIII no. 128; CMS X no. 262. Note also the impression of a metal (gold?) signet ring from LM IB Agia Triada depicting two females in procession (CMS II.6 no. 13), conceivably a prototype for the numerous renderings in soft stone. Also with three females: a lead bezel from Malia House Δα (CMS VS1A no. 58, MM III / LM IA context) and a chlorite mould for ring bezels of copper / bronze or lead (British Museum Greece and Rome 1924, 1113.1; Krzyszkowska 2005a: 129 f. illustration no. 219). In hard stone the *Bildthema* is attested on two carnelian lentoids: CMS VS3 no. 80 (MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹ style; Modi, LH IIIC chamber tomb) and a seal without provenance in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris: M6621 (Krzyszkowska 2020b, passim, fig. 1).



S16

For further LM I soft stone seals here, see *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. II, Chamber B, grid Γ7, layer 3. LM I

A disturbed find spot. However, LM I pottery was found at the spot (e.g. a LM IA Vapheio-type cup), in the adjacent Δ7 grid square (a LM I hemispherical cup with floral decoration) and in the overlying layer Γ7.2 (a fragmentary LM IA hemispherical cup with spirals). All were discarded amid mud bricks of the destroyed platform. (Cf. S11. S12. S15).

*Bibliography:* Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki 2004, 368. 373 fig. 31.20; Krzyszkowska 2020b, 260 fig. 2 f. For the *Bildthema*: Pini 2010, 333–335; Krzyszkowska 2012a, 744 pl. CLXXVIa.

**S17** Amygdaloid (HM 3548)

*fig. 3*

Convex face and faceted reverse; flattened ends; string-hole horizontal. Condition excellent apart from tiny cracks on reverse near upper edge; slight chipping below right string-hole and on lower edge; also along ca. half the length of lower edge a straight guide-line (?) not removed by polishing.

L 2.1 cm, W 1.45 cm, Th 0.8 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, translucent; bright fiery orange-red with a few dark spots; on reverse at one end the stone becomes pale to almost colourless.

*Motif:* a standing lion in left profile rendered in the Cut Style. Two large solid dots form the head and muzzle; the mane is indicated by a series of roughly vertical lines; the body and hindquarters are created by smooth concave cuts. The forelegs are rendered by straight vertical lines; two diagonal lines indicate the upper part of the hind-legs; the lower part of one shown by a single line set at an angle. A deep verti-





S17



S18

cal cut, flanked by two short cuts, evidently represents the tail (the short curving line at the far right may be a mistake). Above the lion's back a Y-shaped feature, deeply engraved, may represent an abbreviated plant motif.

*Commentary and comparanda:* lions constitute one of the most popular motifs in the Cut Style, with about 30 examples showing single lions; rarely with a pair (as on **S18**) or with another animal. Many are engraved on hard stone amygdaloids with faceted backs, chiefly made of carnelian. No close parallels exist for the rendering on **S17**: some examples are quite carefully engraved and veer toward the ›naturalistic‹ end of the spectrum (e.g. CMS II.3 no. 61), while in others the engraving is extremely sketchy, with details kept to a bare minimum (e.g. CMS VS3 no. 165; CMS X no. 231). In most cases a stylized plant filler is included above the animal's back. Impressions on roundels from Chania provide a secure LM I dating for Cut Style lions, e.g. CMS VS1A no. 161 (single lion) and CMS V no. 236 (= CMS VS1A nos. 144. 163; pair of lions). Other examples from datable Cretan contexts include: CMS II.3 no. 61 (Knossos Gold Cup Tomb, LM IB–II); HM 2505 and 2506 (Unexplored Mansion, both LM II: Betts 1984, 188 f. pls. 184c; 185a, M35, P136); and two examples from LM IB contexts at Mochlos: a calcite lentoid from House C.9 (Krzyszowska 2022a, no. IVA.336, LM IB); and an unpublished amygdaloid from the collapse of House A.2 (pair of standing lions). For further Cut Style lions, see the CMS online, searching under ›Löwe‹ and ›Cut Style‹. For the style see: Pini 2000, 209–220 (with lists); Krzyszowska 2005a, 147 n. 90; 201–203. 248–250; Krzyszowska 2020a, esp. 162–165 (dating); Krzyszowska 2022a; Krzyszowska 2022b.

Further Cut Style seals presented here are: **S18–S22**; see also *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context dating:* T. II, Antechamber, grid H14, layers 1. 2. Mixed / LM I

Disturbed fill with bones, stones, plaster and discarded sherds, some LM I. The seal was found in dark earth in layer 1, probably indicating it originated from the looted deposit. A pair of lead earrings in adjacent grid Z14 may also come from the deposit nearby.

### S18 Amygdaloid (HM 3551)

fig. 3

Convex face and faceted reverse; flattened ends; string-hole horizontal. Condition excellent apart from a slight depression on rear, perhaps indicative of slight chipping later smoothed down.

L 3.0 cm, W 1.7 cm, Th 1.0 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, translucent; deep brownish-red in upper portion becoming fiery orange-red below; dark purplish veins run roughly diagonally across the faces; several small dark patches elsewhere.

*Motif:* a pair of lions with heads turned back in the Cut Style. Only the lion in the foreground is fully depicted: the body is relatively thin and elongated; the neck (shown frontally?) broad and covered with roughly vertical lines to indicate the mane. The head appears to be turned upwards and back, touching the head of the lion behind; the eye and muzzle are rendered with solid dots. The forelegs also appear to be shown frontally; while only one hind-leg, terminating in three elongated claws, is in profile. Two deep cuts meeting at angle indicate the tail. The second lion appears in right profile, but only the head, mane and tail are shown. The eye and muzzle are again rendered as solid dots; vertical lines indicate the mane. What is presumably the tail of the second lion actually springs from the back of the first.

*Commentary and comparanda:* lions constitute one of the most popular motifs of the Cut Style, but pairs of lions are extremely rare, e.g. best known from impressions of a hard stone amygdaloid found on a series of roundels at LM IB Chania (CMS V no. 236 = CMS VS1A nos. 144. 163). In that case, the lion in front is clearly depicted in left profile, that behind

in right profile with part of its back shown. For the rather unusual pose with neck / mane and forelegs shown frontally, somewhat clumsily rendered on **S18**, see also: CMS VI no. 267 and CMS X no. 264 (in both cases the lion turns its head toward a goat above its back, in a ›Chimaera‹ composition, for which see here **S6**). In addition, a pair of lions in the Cut Style, uniquely standing and facing each other, appear on an as yet unpublished amygdaloid from Mochlos. For Cut Style lions, see commentary and comparanda for **S17**. Further Cut Style seals presented here are: **S19–S22**; see also *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. II, Entrance and Antechamber, pile B, layer 3. Mixed MM III–LM I–LM III

**S18** was found in mixed fill consisting of disturbed burial remains and discarded debris from the settlement piled up at the entrance and antechamber of the tomb (layers 1–3). Apart from various small finds, including fragmentary crucibles and a stone tool, layer 3 contained a few sherds, and layer 2 a MM III–LM I jug and conical cups and LM III sherds.

**S19** Lentoid (HM 3553)

*fig. 3*

Biconvex; string-hole slightly diagonal to vertical axis. Very slight chipping at string-holes; high polish; condition excellent.

L 2.0 cm, W 1.95 cm, Th 0.9 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, translucent; deep blood-red to fiery orange-red with some darker veins and flecks. *Motif:* on a double ground-line a seated griffin in left profile with back-turned head and both wings displayed: Cut Style. A broad smooth and roughly elliptical cut forms the creature's neck and head; a large solid dot and tiny dot within indicates the eye; the head tapers sharply to the pointed beak. The body and rump are created by two broad cuts, with no attempt at modelling. Beneath the belly a thick contour line, another set at an angle describes the edge of the near foreleg. The foreleg comprises a series of tapering cuts, terminating in short claws. Only one hind-leg is shown, consisting of two lines meeting at an angle beneath the creature's belly; a short curving line indicates the tail. The wings are displayed either side of the griffin's neck, with feathers rendered by a series of parallel lines: shortest near the neck, longest further away. The upper edge of the left wing is marked by two circles and an incomplete circle; on the right a circle, arc and semi-circle: all are created by the tubular drill.

*Commentary and comparanda:* griffins constitute a relatively popular motif in the Cut Style with roughly 35 examples, most shown individually. On lentoids they are generally shown in profile: recumbent (with legs bent) and one wing displayed,



S19

although straight forelegs and two displayed wings are shown on CMS VI no. 268 (›Agia Pelagia‹) and CMS VII no. 135 (›Crete‹). But in style these differ from each other enormously and from the representation on **S19**. Griffins which display both wings are generally associated with amygdaloids, more rarely cushions; they normally adopt a recumbent pose with bent legs, e.g. CMS VS3 no. 349 (Krzyszowska 2022a, no. IV.324: Mochlos House C.3, LM IB). The treatment of wings and presence or absence of filling ornament varies tremendously among Cut Style griffins. However, as on **S19**, the upper edges of wings are sometimes marked with tubular drill ornament, e.g. CMS V nos. 437 (Nichoria, LH IIIA2–B tholos), 590; CMS VS2 no. 32 (Elateia, LH IIIB–C middle chamber tomb); CMS VII no. 93; CMS X no. 267; CMS XI nos. 120. 179; CMS XII no. 247. For further Cut Style griffins, see the CMS online, searching under ›Greif‹ and ›Cut Style‹. Add: an unpublished lentoid of carnelian (T. of the Griffin Warrior, Pylos). For the style see: Pini 2000, 209–220 (with lists); Krzyszkowska 2005a, 147 n. 90; 201–203. 248–250; Krzyszkowska 2020a, esp. 162–165 (dating); Krzyszkowska 2022a, 282 f.; Krzyszkowska 2022b. For griffins generally see Krzyszkowska 2021, 239–241. 243 pls. Llh. LV.

Cf. also the ›naturalistic‹ griffin on glass amygdaloid **S4**.

Further Cut Style seals presented here are: **S17**. **S18**. **S20–S22**; see *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. II, Chamber B, grid H4, layer 1. LM I

**S19** was found with **S9** and **S22** among the remains of a disturbed LM I burial (see above **S9**)



S20

**S20** Amygdaloid (HM 3542)

fig. 3

Convex face and faceted reverse; flattened ends; string-hole horizontal. Slight chipping at the right string-hole; from chipping beneath the left string-hole an irregular crack runs across the reverse; otherwise condition very good.

L 1.4 cm, W 0.95 cm, Th 0.6 cm, SHs 0.15 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, translucent; deep blood-red with dark purplish-black patches and flecks.

*Motif:* bird rendered frontally with outstretched wings in the Cut Style. The body, neck and head of the bird are created by a smooth elliptical cut; a small solid dot near the top of the head marks the eye; the beak points to the left. Broad angled cuts arising from the bird's body form the upper edge of the wings; beneath a series of slightly diagonal lines represent the wing feathers; below these horizontal lines may indicate the lower edge of the wings. The fan-shaped tail feathers are indicated by a series of broad flaring cuts. Along the upper edge of the seal face a series of short lines serve as filling ornament.

*Commentary and comparanda:* birds constitute one of the most popular motifs in the Cut Style with over 80 published examples; more than 60 of these are depicted frontally, with wings outstretched; many occur on amygdaloids, frequently with faceted backs. A detailed account appears in Krzyszkowska 2022b, which clarifies the long-standing confusion between ›talismanic‹ and Cut Style birds, and provides lists (p. 92, 93) of those in the Cut Style. Here it may be noted that most of the birds regarded as ›talismanic‹ by Onassoglou (DtS 138–154, 268–277 pls. L–LV) are in reality Cut Style.

Even among the Cut Style birds found on hard stone amygdaloids there is considerable variation in how the birds are represented. By far the closest to **S20** in detail is a carnelian amygdaloid with faceted back from ›Agia Pelagia‹ (CMS VI no. 272), although in that case the stone is a bright fiery orange-red (Krzyszkowska 2005a, illustration no. C31, colour).

Other hard stone amygdaloids include: CMS II.3 nos. 53 (Knossos, Isopata LM IIIA chamber tomb), 95; CMS V no. 174 (Athens Agora, LH IIIA1 chamber tomb); CMS VS1A no. 117 (Chania, LM IIIA2 context); CMS VI no. 271; CMS VII nos. 122, 259; CMS VIII nos. 57, 155, 158; CMS X no. 318; CMS XI nos. 127, 241; CMS XII nos. 150b, 219. The motif also occurs on two three-sided prisms with amygdaloid faces: CMS II.3 no. 254a (Mochlos T. XII; Krzyszkowska 2022b, 85 f. fig. 7.1a) and CMS X no. 277b. Carnelian is especially favoured, although hard opaque black stones (e.g. haematite) are also represented. Note also two examples made from glass: **S21** and CMS I no. 146 (Mycenae chamber tomb 515, LH IIB–IIIB). CMS IX no. 61 is red serpentine, medium hard, but engraved as a hard stone (Krzyszkowska 2018, 8–10 pl. 5e for identification, comment and colour illustration; also Krzyszkowska 2022b, 90, 92); this is also true of HM 3562 from the settlement at Poros (Odos Nisyrou): Dimopoulou 2000a, 36, not illustrated; Krzyszkowska 2022b, 92 (list).

Further Cut Style seals presented here are: **S17–19**, **S21**, **S22**; see *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. II, Chamber B, niche at east wall, grid E2+Δ2, layer 2. Mixed / LM I?

The find spot was disturbed, without pottery apart from a very few sherds that were found along with poor mixed remains of (LM I?) burials, such as fragments of bones and boars' tusks, glass beads, rivets of a knife and coating plaster of coffins.

*Bibliography:* Krzyszkowska 2022b, 92 (list).

**S21** Amygdaloid (HM 3554)

fig. 3

Convex face and faceted reverse; flattened end; string-hole horizontal. Approximately one-third missing; remainder restored from several fragments; made up in wax; edges battered; surface rather porous; yellowish-brown surface deposit especially in engraving.

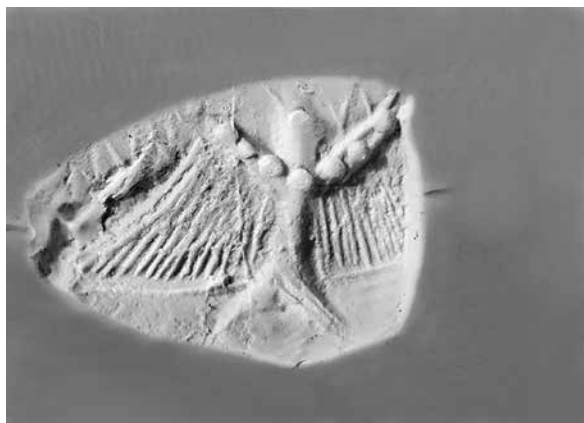
L 2.2 cm, W 1.5 cm, Th 0.8 cm, SHs 0.15 cm.

*Material:* glass, opaque; pale blue-grey with some lighter greyish-white patches; dark blue and charcoal grey patches in the break.

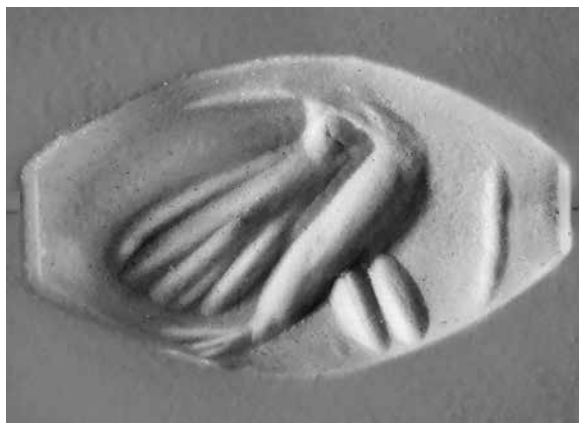
*Motif:* bird rendered frontally with outstretched wings in the Cut Style, although the condition hampers an assessment of details. The body and head are formed by an elliptical cut tapering from head (with dotted eye and short beak turned to the right) to the forked tail. The outstretched wings are held high, their upper edges marked with solid dots; beneath the fan-shaped wing feathers are shown by a series of fine lines; horizontal lines indicate the lower edge of the wings. Along the upper edge of the seal face a series of short lines serve as filling ornament.

*Commentary and comparanda:* see above under **S20**. No close parallels exist for **S21**, but note in particular another example made from glass: CMS I no. 146 (Mycenae chamber tomb 515, LH IIB–IIIB).





S21



S22

Further Cut Style seals presented here are: **S17–S20. S22**; see also *Table 1* and Discussion, below. Further glass seals are: **S4. S10. S11. S15. S34 (?) . S37. S40.** Note also HM 2348 from Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100 pl.33 no.304; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb (colour). For the material see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. II, Entrance, pile B, layer 1. Mixed MM III–LM I–LM III

Mixed context. See **S18** and **S13**.

*Bibliography:* Krzyszkowska 2022b, 92 (list).

**S22** Amygdaloid (HM 3545)

*fig. 3*

Strongly convex seal face and faceted reverse; flattened ends; string-hole horizontal. Upper edge slightly irregular with remains of tool marks, not fully polished away; fresh tool marks at left string-hole; very slight chipping at right string-hole.

L 1.5 cm, W 0.9 cm, Th 0.65 cm, SHs 0.15–0.20 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, translucent; fiery orange with a few small darker flecks.

*Motif:* a water bird in right profile, the neck and head turned sharply backwards; behind a series of broad diagonal cuts indicate the wing feathers; fan-shaped tail feathers behind the body; two rather broad legs in front. A horizontal line directly above the bird's head is conceivably a mistake; at the right of the field a vertical line. Cut Style.

*Commentary and comparanda:* depictions of water birds are not especially common in the Cut Style, and none provides a useful parallel for **S22**. Worth noting, however, are several other highly stylized examples with heads/necks turned sharply back: CMS II.3 nos. 254b (Mochlos T. XII, MM III–LM I) and 357; HM 2616 (Knossos Acropolis LM IA: Catling et al. 1979, 66 fig. 45 pl. 14a. b; Krzyszkowska 2022b, 91 fig. 7.2d). For further discussion and examples, see Krzyszkowska 2022b, 90 f. 92 f. (list), fig. 7.2d–g.

Further Cut Style seals presented here are: **S17–S21**; see also *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. II, Chamber B, grid H4, layer 1. LM I

**S22** was found with **S9** and **S19** among the relics of a disturbed LM I burial (see above **S9**).

*Bibliography:* Krzyszkowska 2022b, 93 (list).

**S23** Scarab (HM 3541)

*fig. 3*

String-hole along longitudinal axis. Rear damaged and corner missing from face; much surface chipping and cracking.

L 1.4 cm, W 1.0 cm, Th 0.5 cm, SHs 0.05–0.10 cm.

*Material:* glazed steatite (?); off-white in colour; in places yellowish.

S23



»Trapezoidal head, stylised simplified presentation crudely cut, barely defined legs, slight fringing on front legs (only), no T-lines (possible double suture at tail end?), irregular face design of elongated spiral lower left leading to lotus bud upper left, with *nfr* in upper left and lower left quarters, single border line« (J. Phillips)

Further scarabs presented here are: **S8** and **S39**. Note also the Egyptian scarab (HM 3267) found in a settlement context at Poros: Dimopoulou 2000a, 28 fig. 1.1; Phillips 2008, II, 236. 362 no. 483.

*Stylistic date:* »probably straddling late Middle King-

dom, Second Intermediate Period; hence sometime in Dynasty XIII« (J. Phillips)

*Context:* T. II, Chamber A, grid I13, layers 3. 4. Mixed LM I–LM III?

A mixed context: a heap of discarded debris. Only a fragment of a conical cup and various small sherds were found in layers 3 and 4. The heap contained discarded material from the settlement including crucibles and slags. In the adjacent layer 2 the remains of a burial, with a disintegrated skeleton, a few conical cups and the fragment of a dagger or knife, suggest a Neopalatial date.

### III. TOMB ON IKAROU AVENUE (1994)

#### Excavation and Contents

Tomb III<sup>15</sup> came to light in 1994 during the digging of trenches for municipal water and sewage pipes at the junction of Ikarou Avenue and Poseidonos Street, about 50 m south of Tomb II. Its shape generally matches that of the other tombs in the central section of the cemetery. It is a large rock-cut cave measuring around 80 m<sup>2</sup> and 2 m in height, with an antechamber and three consecutive chambers on different levels with steps, while at the rear is a small side chamber separated from the main chambers by a wall. Curved walls of rough stones and mud, touching a rock-cut supporting pillar on one side of the antechamber, reached up to the ceiling, with openings in the upper part. This enclosed area formed the deposit for the remains of older burials. Its shape, a kind of above-ground built shaft, is unparalleled in other tombs with rock-cut pit deposits. The tomb entrance was blocked with large stones, at first giving the impression that the tomb had not been opened since the last burial. Burials and the remains of burials swept aside – bones, skulls and funerary offerings, such as pottery and various small objects – covered the floors of the chambers, while the fingerprints of the Minoan builders were still visible in the mud of the walls of the intact deposit. It was eventually discovered that the back wall had been pierced in the Postpalatial period and the small side chamber used as a rubbish dump. The tomb also seems to have been looted then, but although the burials were heavily disturbed, the looting does not appear to have been systematic, as the quantity and quality of the finds attest. The absence of bronze finds may again indicate the looters' main target.

The excavation showed that this tomb, and therefore the original nucleus of the cemetery, was fully in use as early as the Protopalatial period (MM IIB), although it was probably smaller and simpler in layout. It seems that during the Neopalatial period (MM III–LM I) the tomb was enlarged and assumed its definitive shape, leading to some differences from the other tombs, such as the linear arrangement of the consecutive chambers along a particularly long axis. Most of the burials are dated to this period, with the latest belonging, as in other tombs, to the late LM IB phase. A few LM II vases in the side chamber next to the pile of Postpalatial deposits are not directly associated with burials.

During its lengthy period of unbroken use (MM IIB–LM IB) the tomb was used for dozens of burials placed on the floors, on funerary beds or biers, or in wooden coffins. Due to the continual practice of secondary burial, the pushing away of piles of burials against the walls, the placing of bones, crushed to save space, in the deposit, and the disturbance in Postpalatial times, it is difficult to determine the true number of burials. Only five burials

<sup>15</sup> Dimopoulou 1994, 709–711 pls. 230α–ζ; 231α. β.





Fig. 4 Poros, Tomb III: Seals S24–S29, faces and profiles (scale ca. 2 : 1)

were found in situ and in addition 27 skulls were counted, although this figure should not be considered indicative.

There are over 700 finds. Of the seals in the tomb, **S24–S29**, four were found in the deposit and two in the first chamber. Obviously the most valuable find is the gold signet ring (HM 1629) with a cult scene, which was a grave offering for a LM IB burial<sup>16</sup>. A silver ring bezel, necklace beads of gold and other materials, and LM IB pottery also accompanied this exceptional burial. Jewellery is one of the richest categories of finds in the tomb. There were also two fragmentary signet rings of silver; a bronze ring and a gold hoop; pairs of silver and bronze earrings; a silver pin with a twisted stem; and approximately 400 necklace beads of gold, semi-precious stones, glass and faience. There are also unusual ornaments of blue frit and of faience with an inlaid disc of lapis lazuli. The various other small finds include a stone lamp, a knife, a group of four clay birds, a miniature bronze double axe, bronze tweezers, staples, nails, plaster and a piece of wood from the decayed biers, as well as burnt olives and carbonized grain, and even the spinal vertebrae of a small animal in a pot, shedding light on funerary practices.

The pottery from the tomb is impressive in both quantity and quality. Over 500 intact vessels were found, many of them beautifully decorated, covering all the phases of the tomb: MM IIB, MM IIIA, MM IIIB–LM IA, LM IA, LM IB and LM II. The most numerous, as in all the tombs of the cemetery, are jugs and cups, but there are also lamps and braziers, strainers, other perforated vessels and double vases. An assemblage of 150 vases, mostly Protopalatial (MM IIB) with some Neopalatial (MM III, LM IA), was found in the deposit, in a fill of burnt earth, skulls and crushed bones. A MM IIB group of fine quality polychrome Kamares ware stands out, including vessels with exact parallels from Phaistos.

Of the Postpalatial and earlier household rubbish in the small side chamber, it is worth noting a Canaanite amphora, loom weights, fragments of crucibles, grinders and whetstones.

<sup>16</sup> Dimopoulou – Rethemiotakis 2000. Note that here (p. 39 n. 1) the tomb was said to be located in Ikaros Street; the correct street name is Ikarou Avenue (Λεωφόρος Ικάρου) but the tomb and location are one and the same.

## Catalogue

### S24 Discoid (HM 3561)

fig. 4

Plump biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Somewhat abraded and chipped at string-holes; slight cracking from upper edge to underside; otherwise condition good.

L 0.7 cm, W 0.8 cm, Th 0.5 cm, SHs 0.15 cm.

*Material:* amethyst, translucent; pale lilac.

*Motif:* the field is divided by a pair of horizontal lines; beneath diagonal cross-hatching. Above three plant-like elements, each comprising a central ›stem‹ from near the top of which diagonal lines fan outwards. ›Architectural‹ group.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the very small size of the seal face permits only simplified features of the ›architectural‹ group, notably the division of the field into registers and cross-hatching. Plant-like elements are not common in the group but cf. CMS III no. 126 and CMS IV no. 159, also placed in the upper portion of the field. Roughly 70 published examples of the ›architectural‹ group are attested in hard and medium hard stones; two are made of amethyst: CMS II.2 no. 18 (Kamilari, tholos) and CMS XI no. 19. Amethyst is a rare stone in Aegean glyptic with ca. 50 examples spanning MM II/III–LB I/II; some may have been re-worked beads, as perhaps was S24 suggested by its exceptionally plump shape. For the material: Krzyszkowska 2005b, with list of seals p. 127 f. For the ›architectural‹ group: Pini 2007; Krzyszkowska 2015b.

Further examples of the ›architectural‹ group presented here are: S25. S30. S32–S34; cf. also S1. See Table 1 and for the material see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* MM II–III

*Context:* T. III, Deposit, layer 4, final (bottom). MM IIB–MM IIIA

No intact vases: only several sherds similar to the MM IIB and MM IIIA vases of the superimposed layer 3 were found in layer 4. In layer 4 and at the same spot as S24 were found a silver ring with an elliptical bezel, a bronze ring with circular bezel, and a gold ›ivy‹-shaped bead.

### S25 Discoid (HM 3558)

fig. 4

String-hole horizontal. Roughly two-thirds of face has sheered off; upper edge damaged on face and reverse; some surface cracking and pitting; much shattered within.

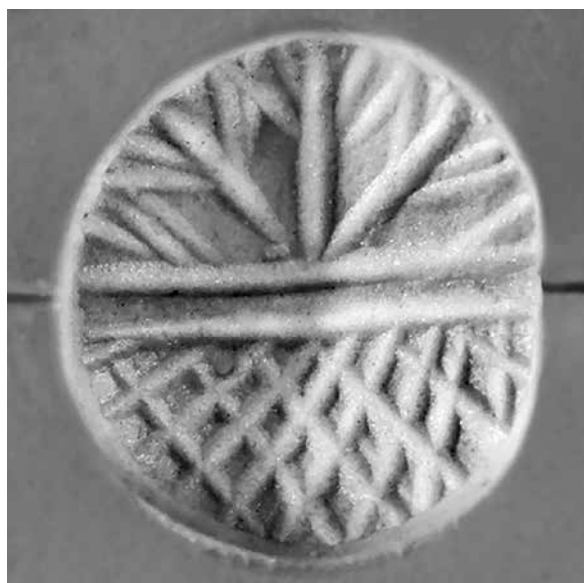
Dm 1.5 cm, Th 0.6 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* rock crystal, colourless and clear; translucent where stone is shattered within.

*Motif:* ›architectural‹ group; linear decoration based on a Π-shaped element (Pi-motif) created by two sets of ›Bandlinien‹ (broad bands flanked by fine lines). Between the horizontal bands is fine diagonal hatching; between the preserved uprights fine diagonal lines. Near the lower edge of the seal face, traces of broad grooves flanked by fine lines and meeting at an angle, conceivably the remains of a diamond or lozenge-shaped pattern in the centre of the field.

*Commentary and comparanda:* originally a fine example of the ›architectural‹ group; closely comparable are CMS II.2 no. 275 and CMS IX no. 36, both of rock crystal. This material was used for ca. 20 discoids with ›architectural‹ decoration, roughly 35 % of those executed in hard stones. For the ›architectural‹

S24



S25



group: Pini 2007; Krzyszkowska 2015b (on CMS IX no. 36).

Further examples of the ›architectural‹ presented here are: **S24**. **S30**. **S32–S34**; cf. also **S1**; see also *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date*: MM II–III

*Context*: T. III, Deposit, layer 3. MM IIB–MM IIIA–MM IIIB

**S25** was found with dozens of vases of varying MM stylistic phases: many polychrome MM IIB; several MM IIIA, such as ridged white-dotted cups; and MM IIIB examples, mostly tall black-painted jugs with white decorative motifs or patches in dark paint.

**S26** Squat cylinder (HM 3560)

fig. 4

String-hole vertical; the upper and lower edges of the seal are not precisely parallel. Edges somewhat chipped; deep pitting in places; also some superficial scratching (?) or perhaps trial marks for engraving (?). On both ends remains of tubular drill adjacent to the string-hole.

L 1.1 cm, Dm 0.85–0.90 cm, SHs 0.275–0.30 cm.

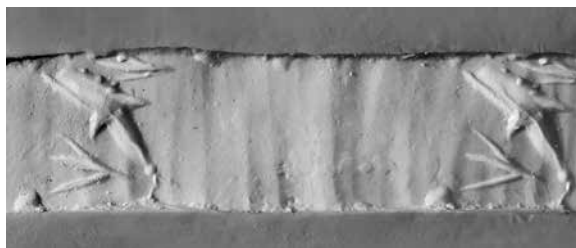
*Material*: agate, translucent honey-coloured with some paler yellow areas; a faint sense of banding at right angles to main axis of seal; small opaque white inclusions.

*Motif*: a dolphin in the ›talismatic‹ style. The animal appears to have a short pointed nose; a thin slit at the mouth; and a fin on its back. Along the animal's side a wavy line, terminating in a solid dot; beyond simple forked tail-fins. In front of the dolphin, a plant ›spray‹; another, smaller, behind its head.

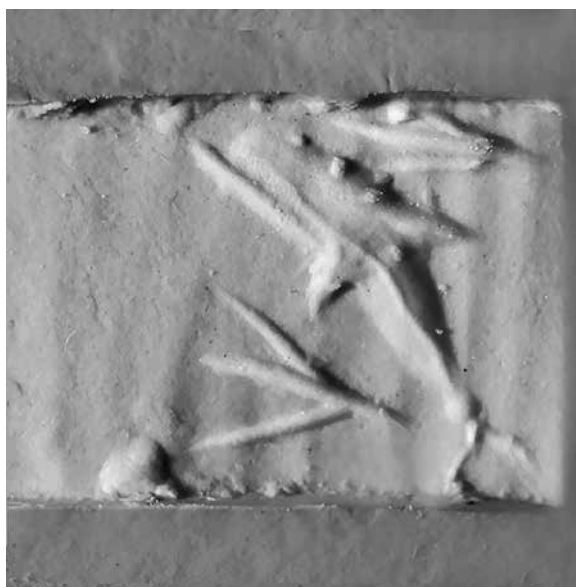
*Commentary and comparanda*: dolphins constitute a relatively rare motif in the ›talismatic‹ style with fewer than 20 published examples, although a distinction is not always easy between large fish (e.g. here **S3**) and genuine dolphins: DtS 158. 159, 282–284 pls. LIX. LX (FI-64–84). Ordinarily dolphins are shown with more or less bottle-shaped noses; fins above and below the body (the latter are lacking in **S26**); and a simple forked tail-fin. Parallels include: CMS V no. 176; CMS VI no. 276; CMS VII no. 77; CMS VIII no. 59; CMS XII no. 158 (all with lower fins).

The strangely empty composition on **S26** and possible traces of trial marks for engraving suggest that work on the cylinder may have been abandoned, perhaps owing to impurities in the stone. Some support for this suggestion comes from the fact that in the ›talismatic‹ style dolphins are regularly depicted in pairs — sometimes set *tête-bêche* — or even in rows of three or four animals.

Cylinder seals were not a favoured shape in the Aegean; locally-made examples amount to roughly ca. 35, split more or less evenly between hard and soft materials, and spanning EM III–MM IA to LB IIIA2.



S26



S26, detail

Several examples are attributed to the ›talismatic‹ style, though the motifs are considerably more complex than on **S26**: CMS V no. 190; CMS VS1B no. 338; CMS VI no. 246. Note also CMS VI no. 276 depicting a row of four dolphins (designated ›Fisch‹ in the CMS online) set diagonally across the field; the filling ornament suggests this should be classed as Cut Style rather than ›talismatic‹. The squat form of **S26** is exceptionally rare but cf. CMS II.2 no. 59; CMS IV no. 102.

Further seals of the ›talismatic‹ style presented here are: **S2**. **S3**. **S9**. **S10**. **S27**. **S35–S37**; see also *Table 1* and Discussion, below. For examples from Poros Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100. 140–142 pls. 32. 33 nos. 300. 302. 303; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIb (colour).

*Stylistic date*: MM III–LM I

*Context*: T. III, Chamber A, grid Δ3, layer 1. MM IIIB–LM I

**S26** was found by the remains of a disturbed burial, of which mixed up bones and part of a skull were preserved. Apart from **S26**, a silver pin, a conical cup and a monochrome hemispherical cup were found at the spot indicating a MM IIIB–LM I setting.





S27



S28

**S27 Lentoid (HM 3559)**

fig. 4

Biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Much superficial splitting; several deep cracks penetrate the stone.

Dm 1.2 cm, T 0.55 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* soft to medium hard opaque stone, probably serpentine; fine homogeneous matrix charcoal-grey to chocolate-brown in colour; light-brown inclusions having the appearance of steatite with a slightly soapy feel.

*Motif:* flying fish in the ›talismanic‹ style set diagonally across the field. Two broad wing-like fins are set either side of the body, which ends in a forked tail. The mouth is slightly open; a tubular drill was used to render the eye. ›Sprays‹ above, in front and beneath the fish.

*Commentary and comparanda:* flying fish constitute a popular motif in the ›talismanic‹ style with more than 70 examples. As is true of the ›talismanic‹ style generally, most examples of flying fish are executed in hard semi-precious stones, although around 20 % occur on seals of soft or medium hard stones, as is S27. In a few cases rotary tools were seemingly employed (e.g. CMS II.3 no. 262; CMS II.4 nos. 94, 95; CMS IX nos. 58, 60) as is true of S27. For the manner in which the flying fish on S27 is rendered, CMS IX no. 58 provides the closest parallel; the seal is made of medium hard red serpentine, not red jasper as published: Krzyszkowska 2018, 8–10 pl. 5c (colour). For ›talismanic‹ flying fish generally: DtS 156, 157, 277–281 pls. LVI–LVIII (FI-1–50). For further examples see the CMS online, searching under ›Fliegender Fisch‹ and ›Talismanisch‹.

Further seals of the ›talismanic‹ style presented here

are: S2, S3, S9, S10, S26, S35–S37; see also Table 1 and Discussion, below. For examples from Poros Tomb II–1967: Muhly 1992, 100, 140–142 pls. 32, 33 nos. 300, 302, 303; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb (colour).

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. III, Deposit, layer 2. MM IIB–MM IIIA–MM IIIB

Layers 1 and 2 of the deposit are unified, suggesting a single deposition event. In layer 1 were found at least 51 intact vases, mixed MM IIIA, MM IIIB and some LM IA. Layer 2 yielded more than 30 vases, including some polychrome MM IIB, more MM IIIA and MM IIIB, all mixed together. In contrast to layer 1, layer 2 does not appear to contain fine LM I pottery, although this is fortuitous, since they constitute a single stratum.

**S28 Lentoid (HM 3557)**

fig. 4

Biconvex; string-hole diagonal. Both string-holes slightly chipped and abraded to rear; slight pitting on reverse; otherwise condition good.

Dm 1.3 cm, Th 0.5 cm, SHs 0.15 cm.

*Material:* carnelian, translucent; very deep reddish-orange through orange to pale yellow; almost milky white at lower edge; a few darker veins within.

*Motif:* a wild cat running in right profile through a marshy landscape. The cat is depicted in flying gallop with all four legs shown outstretched; the body is smooth with a thick contour line marking the belly and hind legs. The shoulder seems to have been created by the solid drill; transitions to body and neck are somewhat clumsy. The head is small

with open mouth; a small dot marks the eye; the ears are rather long and tapering. The long tail curls upwards among the reeds. At the lower edge of the seal face a thick wavy line evidently indicates a river or water course; from this grow clumps of reeds or grasses, each have two or three ›leaves‹.

*Commentary and comparanda:* representations of wild cats are extremely rare in the glyptic repertoire; always hunting water birds, sometimes in marshy or riverine landscapes: CMS IS no. 75; CMS II.3 no. 172; CMS VI nos. 367, 368; CMS VS1B no. 139 (Anthia, LH IIA–B tholos). Only the last comes from a secure context, but on stylistic grounds all can be placed within MM III–LM I or LM I. See Krzyszkowska 2010b, 175, 176 (conventions for marshy landscape); Krzyszkowska 2014, 342 (for the species); Krzyszkowska 2015a, 104–106 fig. 5. **S28**, an exceptionally fine representation, is the sole example showing a wild cat without a bird or birds; instead the engraver chose to focus on a more detailed landscape setting than appears in other examples.

For further MM III–LM I seals with ›naturalistic‹ motifs, see *Table 1* and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. III, Deposit, layer 3. MM IIB–MM IIIA–MM IIIB

See above **S25**. Layer 3 does not appear to contain mature LM I pottery. Dozens of beads were found in layer 3, including a lentoid of grey amethyst (?) and a gold papyrus-shaped bead.

**S29** Lentoid (HM 3556)

fig. 4

Biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Upper portion of seal face lost through conchoidal fracturing (diagnostic for jasper); pitting and some scratching on the surface; small patches of crystalline deposit.

Dm 1.4 cm, Th 0.55 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* jasper, opaque; cherry red with numerous small dark-grey inclusions.

*Motif:* standing quadruped in right profile. Head, shoulder and body are delineated with rather thick contour lines; there is little modelling; eye and nose are indicated by solid dots. The long tail hangs down behind the animal's hind legs; the sex is shown. Traces of a long curving horn appear near where the face has been lost through fracturing; just beneath, two straight parallel lines may be remains of plant fillers and/or perhaps spears or darts. In front of the animal a single vertical line; beneath a ground line.

*Commentary and comparanda:* damage to the seal face makes it hard to assess the motif. However,



S29

traces of long curving horns suggest that the animal is probably a wild goat, even though a long tail is more commonly associated with bovines (but cf. CMS VI no. 247). The pose and style is also hard to evaluate. A standing pose is the norm for goats in the MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹ style, whereas in LM I goats are generally shown in a running pose. But **S29** lacks signs of solid drill regularly used to form the bodies of ›talismanic‹ goats; pronounced contour lines do not occur in that style. Plant fillers, characteristic of the ›talismanic‹ style are absent here. However, it is worth noting that horizontal string-holes (as on **S29**) are the norm for lentoids depicting ›talismanic‹ goats, but are rare later; cf. also **S41**.

For further LM I hard stone seals with ›naturalistic‹ motifs, see *Table 1*.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. III, Chamber A, grid E4, layer 1. LM I

**S29** was found in the outer room of the tomb, by the antechamber, and although it lacks a specific burial context, it may be linked with Burial I in nearby grids. Most of the sherds in E4 and other adjacent grids such as Δ4, are mostly LM IA–B, e.g. a small pyxis decorated with a foliate band. But there are also one or two MM III, e.g. a sherd of a white-dotted cup. Burial I, where the gold ›Sacred Conversation‹ signet ring (HM 1629) was found, was accompanied by LM IB pottery.

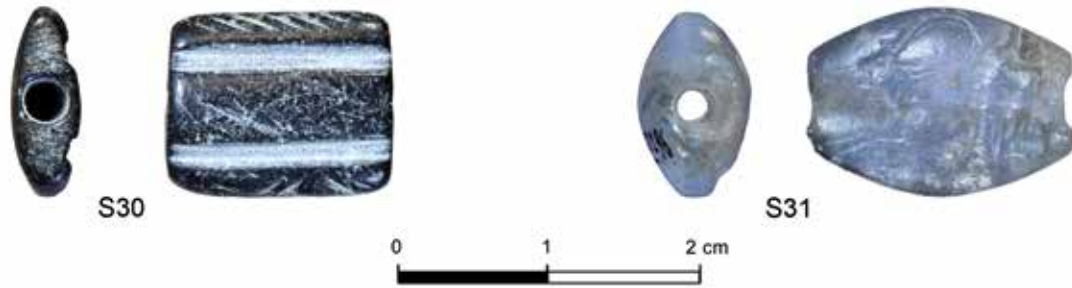


Fig. 5 Poros, Tomb IV: Seals S30 and S31, faces and profiles (scale ca. 2 : 1)

#### IV. TOMB ON POSEIDONOS AND ZAKROU STREETS (1999)

##### Excavation and Contents

Tomb IV, like Tomb III, was revealed in 1999 during work on a new municipal water pipeline, at the junction of Poseidonos and Zakrou Streets. It was found, however, that it had already been discovered in the late 1950s during the construction of a neighbouring building, when a supporting pillar pierced the north wall of the tomb. It may even have been known earlier, its breached entrance having been visible for several years. The tomb was expected to be disturbed or even completely looted, although our worst fears ultimately proved unfounded.

The tomb measures approximately 75 m<sup>2</sup> and is elongated, with two rock-cut supporting pillars dividing the inner chamber from the entrance area. A small built wall, touching one pillar and terminating at the outer wall, divides the front part into two rooms. A niche and curved wall at the north-east end of the small wall delimit a pit deposit measuring around 6 m<sup>2</sup>. The whole tomb was disturbed to varying degrees. The worst disturbance was in the inner chamber, while parts of a few burials, more skulls and a fragment of a timber bier placed on the floor were found in the front area, between the small wall and the deposit. Fortunately the deposit was intact.

Like the other tombs, Tomb IV was in use from MM III to LM IB. Although the disturbance prevents us from drawing secure conclusions, the bulk of the MM IIIA–B material in the deposit probably came from the inner chamber. The outer chamber, from which most of the non-deposit finds are derived, mainly contained LM IA and LM IB vessels.

There are over 250 vases in total, the majority of which, over 150, were found piled in the deposit. As in the other tombs, these are mainly sets of jugs and cups of various types. The remains of burials and pottery in the deposit lack any stratigraphical sequence and probably indicate a single event, since stylistically mixed vessels are found together in the same spot. LM IA and LM IB pots with characteristic motifs may be found together alongside MM III examples. For instance, in layer 5 of the deposit, a LM IB vessel with relief sea-shells was found next to a MM III white-spotted jug. Other finds from the chambers and the deposit include pieces of gold foil; a silver pin; two small bronze vases and a bronze dagger; bronze arrowheads and boars' tusks from a helmet belonging to a warrior burial; various beads of gold, semi-precious stones, glass and faience; staples from biers, etc. Apart from seals S30 and S31, the tomb also contained a small gold three-sided prism seal with the figure of a runner and religious scenes, as well as two fragmentary silver signet rings (as yet unpublished).

## Catalogue

## S30 Cushion (HM 3795)

fig. 5

Biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Somewhat abraded on seal face and edges; much surface scratching. L 1.5 cm, W 0.7 cm, Th 0.5 cm, SHs 0.25 cm.

*Material:* chlorite, opaque; dark grey-green to black with a few pale green flecks; light grey in engraving; structure somewhat granular, now mostly worn smooth.

*Motif:* linear decoration comprising two broad deep lines running parallel to longitudinal axis; above and below a series of short diagonal lines. Between the two broad lines faint traces of two diagonal lines.

*Commentary and comparanda:* a motif of the ›architectural‹ group. Examples in soft stones invariably have simpler designs than those executed in hard stone (e.g. S25. S32. S33), but S30 is exceptionally simple. The closest parallel is CMS II.3 no. 184 (Knossos, stray find). Roughly 60 examples of the ›architectural‹ group occur in soft stone; more than 20 are cushions, a shape first attested at MM II Phaistos. For the ›architectural‹ group see: Pini 2007; Krzyszkowska 2015b.

Further examples of the ›architectural‹ group presented here are: S24. S25. S32–S34; cf. also S1; see also Table 1 and Discussion below.

*Stylistic date:* MM II–MM III

*Context:* T. IV, Deposit, layer 4. MM III–LM I

S30 was found in layer 4 with a series of tall jugs and cups of various types, mainly MM III, although there are also LM I examples. Evidence from the underlying layer 5 is also indicative, suggesting a single deposition event for both layers, which comprised vases of varying phases: dozens of MM III jugs and cups with black paint and white decoration, LM IA vases with dark-on-light motifs, and LM IB examples, such as a rectangular vessel with attached relief sea-shells. Apart from S30, layer 4

comprised the remains of burials, such as beads of lapis lazuli and rock crystal.

## S31 Amygdaloid (HM 3796)

fig. 5

Plump with flattened ends; string-hole horizontal. Battered and abraded; some shattering within; surface pitting; deep scratches and cracks; chipping at the SHs worn smooth.

L 1.7 cm, W 1.25 cm, Th 0.75 cm, SHs 0.30 cm.

*Material:* blue chalcedony; translucent light blue although greyish-white in upper right-hand corner of seal face with a corresponding cloudy white banding on reverse. In lower portion slight pinkish-orange tinge when held to the light; slightly ›waxy‹ feel.

*Motif:* wild goat running to the right in a landscape setting. The goat springs forward from a stand of stylized trees so that only its forequarters, neck, head and horns are shown. The engraving is delicate and detailed: on the head the cheek, nose, lower jaw, eye and ear are shown through a series of solid drillings and short lines; a curving line in front of the goat's neck may indicate the ›beard‹ found in males. The horns are long and curve backwards, intersecting near the tips; near the head short lines cross the horns to indicate ribbing. The neck and chest are marked with fine contour lines; the transition to the shoulder is somewhat clumsy; the body smooth. A pair of stick-like legs set at a slight angle suggests a flying gallop pose. Beneath the goat a series of seven ovoid elements of varying sizes indicate a rocky landscape. Behind a stand of three highly stylized trees, with smooth vertical semi-cylindrical trunks and a series of large and small solid dots and a few tubular drill marks to indicate foliage.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the rendering of the goat and the landscape setting accord with

S30



S31





MM III–LM I glyptic, but the motif as a whole and several details are completely unparalleled. For the pronounced shoulder see, for example: CMS II.3 no. 340; CMS II.8 nos. 375. 376; CMS VS1B no. 247; CMS VI nos. 178. 180. For the ribbed horns: CMS IS no. 82; CMS VS1B no. 247; CMS VI no. 178. 179; CMS VII nos. 42. 68; CMS VIII no. 110c (also for the flying gallop); CMS X no. 281. For wild goats in landscape settings (excluding the ›talismatic‹ style): CMS II.6 no. 70 (flying gallop); CMS II.7 no. 62; CMS II.8 nos. 353. 354. 376; CMS III no. 150; CMS VS1B no. 247; CMS VI nos. 178. 180; CMS VII no. 68; CMS XI no. 189. A single parallel exists for an animal springing forward from within a landscape: a lion that leaps out from a clump of reeds on CMS VS1B no. 331; here too only animal's fore-quarters are shown. Although the execution of the rock work beneath the goat on S31 is fairly com-

mon, the rendering of the trees behind is virtually unparalleled (but cf. here S36). It is worth stressing that this is a true landscape setting, integral to the narrative of the motif. For landscapes and landscape elements: Krzyszkowska 2010b, esp. 173–175.

For further MM III–LM I seals with ›naturalistic‹ motifs see *Table 1*; also Discussion, below.

The condition of the seal suggests it may have been in circulation or use for a considerable period before deposition.

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. IV, Grid A3, layer 1. MM III–LM I

S31 was found on the chamber floor, among a few scattered bones of a very disturbed burial. Other finds at the spot were a monochrome MM IIIB–LM IA cup, sherds of jugs and MM III ridged straight-sided cups, two glass beads, the fragment of a bronze dagger and the bezel of a silver ring.

## V. TOMB ON SPANAKIS STREET AND BY-ROAD OF POSEIDONOS STREET (1999–2000)

### Excavation and Contents

Tomb V was revealed in December 1999 at the junction of Spanakis Street and an unnamed by-road of Poseidonos Street, during works to lay municipal water and sewage pipes. With a total area of around 61 m<sup>2</sup>, the tomb has two almost rectangular chambers across the antechamber, a small side chamber in one of the main chambers, and a large deposit in the other. Three solid, rectangular rock-cut pillars abutting on the wall and a similar free-standing pillar support the roof to a height of over 2.20 m and divide the chambers into smaller spaces. The deposit, against the wall of the south chamber, is delimited by a low curved wall.

At first sight, the tomb appeared to be thoroughly looted, probably with later configurations so it could occasionally be used for habitation. The entrance was not blocked by stones: its opening widened and squared off, like the chambers, contrary to usual practice. Nails were found embedded in the walls of the north chamber, while piles of disturbed earth mixed with finds of different periods partially covered the floor of the chambers. Characteristic finds included narghile pipes, a coin of the Venetian period, an iron buckle, glazed pottery sherds and an iron canon ball, all indicative of the 17<sup>th</sup> century siege of Chandax (Herakleion), when Ottoman troops were encamped in the area. The fill of the earth piles also contained rubbish from the Minoan settlement, such as loom weights and crucibles, and a plethora of mixed remains from looted and scattered burials, such as bronze staples from biers, Neopalatial sherds and conical cups, scattered necklace beads of various materials, and two gold earrings and a pair of bronze earrings from a pile in the north chamber. In the floor of the south chamber were the remains of a burial with bones of the upper torso, on which was found a LM IB double jug with crocus decoration, obviously the work of the same workshop and perhaps even the same vase-painter as the cup with the same decoration associated with the elite LM IB burial in Tomb I, mentioned above. Thus this tomb, too, is shown to have remained in use until the final phase of the Neopalatial period.

Given the state of the chambers, it was a pleasant surprise to find that here too the deposit had escaped looting. The wide pit in the south chamber, measuring approximately 7 m<sup>2</sup>, was found intact and contained over 300 vessels, mainly jugs and cups of various types





Fig. 6 Poros, Tomb V: Seals S32–S39, faces and profiles (scale ca. 2 : 1)

stylistically dated from MM III to LM I, with extensive representation of the two MM III phases. Various remains of rich burials were also found in the deposit, including many dozens of necklace beads of semi-precious stones, glass and faience; a gold ring inlaid with lapis lazuli; a small funerary gold ring with Linear A signs; one gold, one silver, one lead and several bronze earrings; broken bronze and bone pins; other small objects and many bronze staples from biers. Apart from the eight seals S32–S39, at the bottom of the deposit was found, together with MM III vessels, a perfectly preserved rare discoid seal of gold<sup>17</sup>.

## Catalogue

S32 Amygdaloid (HM 3800)

fig. 6

Biconvex, with flattened ends; string-hole horizontal. Very slight chipping near left edge and at the right string-hole; slight surface pitting and scratching on rear; otherwise condition excellent. L 1.8 cm, W 1.4 cm, Th 0.7 cm, SHs 0.25 cm.

Material: agate, with alternating bands of translucent pale honey-colour and opaque creamy-white; at right the stone is almost clear.

Motif: a motif of the ›architectural‹ group. The field is divided by two ›Bandlinien‹ (broad vertical bands each flanked by fine vertical lines); similar ›Bandlinie‹ at each end of the seal. In the centre of the field

<sup>17</sup> Dimopoulou 2010.



S32

a series of ›Bandlinien‹ set at angles. At the right double zig-zag lines; at the left a fine herringbone pattern.

*Commentary and comparanda:* an exceptionally fine example of the MM II–III ›architectural‹ group, of which some 70 are attested in hard stones, although amygdaloids are extremely rare: CMS II.2 nos. 11. 75; CMS III nos. 139. 141; CMS X no. 246. None provides an especially good parallel for S32, but cf. CMS III no. 139 for division of the field by four vertical ›Bandlinien‹ and double zig-zags. All the other individual elements also find parallels in the repertoire, although the combination differs from one seal to the next. For the ›architectural‹ group: Pini 2007; Krzyszkowska 2015b.

Further examples of the ›architectural‹ group presented here are: S24. S25. S30. S33. S34; cf. also S1; see also Table 1 and Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* MM II–III

*Context:* T. V, Deposit, south sector, grid Γ3, layer 8. MM III

S32 was found in layer 8 of the deposit with MM III pottery of both phases, such as MM IIIA ridged white-dotted cups alongside MM IIIB with white decoration and an example of early ripple ware.

#### S33 Discoid (HM 3802)

fig. 6

Biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Slightly chipped near top right of seal face; some random scratches on reverse; otherwise condition very good.

Dm 1.3 cm, Th 0.6 cm, SHs 0.25 cm.

*Material:* hard opaque variegated stone; creamy-white matrix with patches and smaller flecks of red and black; one small rust-coloured patch on seal face.

*Motif:* motif of the ›architectural‹ group: linear decoration based on a Π-shaped element (Pimotif) created by ›Bandlinien‹ (broad bands flanked by fine lines). In the centre of the Π, broad bands form a lozenge,



S33

which is filled with fine diagonal lattice pattern. Either side of the vertical ›Bandlinie‹, fine diagonal hatching. In the upper part of the field, parallel to the horizontal bar of the Π another broad ›Bandlinie‹; in between the two bands a zig-zag pattern consisting of fine double lines. Above the uppermost ›Bandlinie‹ a series of short fine vertical lines.

*Commentary and comparanda:* a fine example of the ›architectural‹ group, in which motifs based on Π-shaped elements are common. Cf. here S25; also CMS II.2 no. 275 and CMS IX no. 36. For the ›architectural‹ group: Pini 2007; Krzyszkowska 2015b (on CMS IX no. 36). Further examples of the ›architectural‹ group presented here are: S24. S25. S30. S32. Table 1 and Discussion, below.

No precise parallels exist for the stone, although it has affinities to that used for another ›architectural‹ discoid, CMS IV no. 158 (described in the CMS as ›mottled jasper‹, but the identification is open to question).

*Stylistic date:* MM II–MM III

*Context:* T. V, Deposit, north sector, grid B4, layer 9. MM III

Pottery in layer 9 found with S33 was mainly MM III, including vases of both stylistic phases: MM IIIA white-dotted and black-painted cups as well as MM IIIB examples, such as a cup with white spiral and straight-sided cups with early ripple ware.

#### S34 Discoid (HM 3804)

fig. 6

Plump and biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Surface porous and slightly ›powdery‹; some craquelure on the reverse which is, however, rather better preserved than seal face; brownish deposit and / or discolouration on profiles.



S34

L 1.4 cm, W 1.5 cm, Th 0.7 cm, SHs 0.25 cm.  
*Material:* vitreous, opaque; light blue-grey with some darker areas; dull white to beige in some places; a few small iridescent patches.

*Motif:* motif of the ›architectural‹ group. Condition hampers assessment of details, but the motif seemingly involves several ›Bandlinien‹ (broad bands flanked by narrow lines) set vertically and horizontally. In the upper quadrants diagonal hatching; near the lower edge ›ladder‹ ornament.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the condition precludes certain identification of the material, since it is unclear if the motif is wheel-cut (indicative of glass) or engraved by hand, in which case frit would be more likely. No other example of the ›architectural‹ group is attested in a vitreous material.

Further examples of the ›architectural‹ group presented here are: S24. S25. S30. S32. S33; cf. also S1; see Table 1 and Discussion, below. Cf. also the glass seals: S4. S10. S11. S15. S21. S37. S40; also HM 2348 from Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100 pl. 33 no. 304; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIb (colour). For the material and dating see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* MM II–MM III

*Context:* T. V, Deposit, south sector, grids A3. B2. B3. Γ1. Γ2. Γ3. Δ2; layer 9. MM III

There was no differentiation of pottery in layer 9 at the south and the north sectors (see above S33) of the deposit. Pottery found with S34 was also stylistically MM IIIA and IIIB, showing examples of both phases such as white-dotted cups, a cup with added red paint, and cups with early ripple ware decoration, respectively. In the underlying layer 10 (bottom) of the south sector was found the exceptional



S35

gold discoid HM 1716, again with MM IIIA–B pottery.

S35 Lentoid (HM 3798)

fig. 6

Biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Very slight surface pitting; some scratching on reverse; otherwise condition very good.

Dm 1.15 cm, Th 0.55 cm, SHs 0.175 cm.

*Material:* jasper, opaque; red with grey-white veins running through upper part of seal face and onto the reverse.

*Motif:* octopus in the ›talismanic‹ style. Head formed by a large solid drill, supplemented by tubular drillings; tubular drill for the eyes. Either side of the body the three rows of tentacles are created by the tubular drill set at an angle and disposed in opposing directions. Above the octopus three ›border clumps‹ hang down into the field; three smaller ›border clumps‹ below.

*Commentary and comparanda:* a very fine rendering of an octopus in the ›talismanic‹ style. Some 30 examples of this motif are attested in the ›talismanic‹ style, almost invariably made of hard stones; none provides a close parallel for S35. However, all of the key features found in our example (use of solid drill for the head; tubular drill set at an angle for tentacles; ›border clumps‹) are repeatedly found in the repertoire. For the motif: see DtS 68–74. 239–241 pl. XXVII. For an updated list of examples, see the CMS online, searching under ›Oktopus‹, ›Talismanisch‹. Add a new example from Mochlos House C.3: Krzyszkowska 2022a, no. IV.322.

Further seals of the ›talismanic‹ style presented here are: S2. S3. S9. S10. S26. S27. S36. S37; see also



*Table 1* and Discussion, below. For examples from Poros Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100. 140–142 pls. 32. 33 nos. 300. 302. 303; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb (colour).

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. V, Deposit, south sector, grids A3. B2. B3. Γ1. Γ2. Γ3. Δ2; layer 5. MM III–LM I

**S35** from layer 5 of the south sector of the deposit was found with stylistically mixed MM III and LM I pottery: there are characteristic MM IIIA–B white-dotted and late polychrome cups, as well as typical LM I dark-on-light vases decorated with spirals, floral motifs, foliate band and ripple ware.

**S36** Amygdaloid (HM 3801)

*fig. 6*

Plump biconvex; truncated ends; string-hole vertical. Badly damaged at both string-holes; deep crack running down seal face from upper to lower string-hole; cracking on reverse; some surface pitting and scratching.

H pres. 1.35 cm, W 1.35 cm, Th 0.7 cm, upper SH 0.25 cm, lower SH 0.20 cm.

*Material:* rock crystal, colourless; clear to translucent where shattered within.

*Motif:* a stylized palm tree in landscape setting. The trunk of the tree is represented by a long semi-cylindrical element terminating in a large solid dot; from each side of which spring two sets of fan-shaped leaves or fronds. A large fan-shaped ›border clump‹ frames the composition at the right. At the foot of the tree a large semi-circular element filled with diagonal cross-hatching, conceivably intended to represent rocky ground.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the condition of the seal hampers a complete understanding of the motif

S36



and several of its constituent elements. A carnelian amygdaloid in New York (CMS XII no. 180) also depicts a palm tree set on the vertical axis; the fan-like fronds are comparable to those on **S36**, but the trunk is flatter. For the semi-cylindrical tree trunk, the best parallel is offered by those depicted on **S31**. No parallels exist for the large rock (?) filled with cross-hatching; but similar hatching is sometimes found on ›talismatic‹ seals, usually in association with a ground line, e.g. CMS II.3 no. 258; CMS VS1A nos. 190. 192; CMS XI no. 159. The ›border clump‹ on **S36** is entirely characteristic of the ›talismatic‹ style, as is the engraving technique with undisguised use of cutting wheels and drills.

Further seals of the ›talismatic‹ style presented here are: **S2. S3. S9. S10. S26. S27. S35. S37**; see also *Table 1* and Discussion, below. For examples from Poros Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100. 140–142 pls. 32. 33 nos. 300. 302. 303; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb (colour).

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. V, Deposit, south sector, grid Γ2, layer 9 (bottom). MM III

**S36** was found along with MM III pottery in the same sector and layer of the deposit as **S34** (see above).

**S37** Cushion (HM 3803)

*fig. 6*

String-hole vertical. Surface porous and slightly corroded, but some polish remains on reverse.

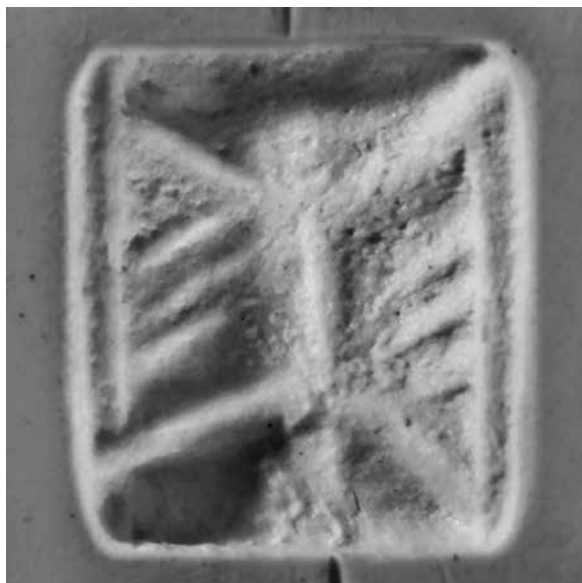
H 1.1 cm, W 0.95 cm, Th 0.45 cm, SHs 0.15 cm.

*Material:* vitreous, opaque blueish-grey to greyish-white; a few dark blue flecks and veins; iridescent patches on reverse; probably glass.

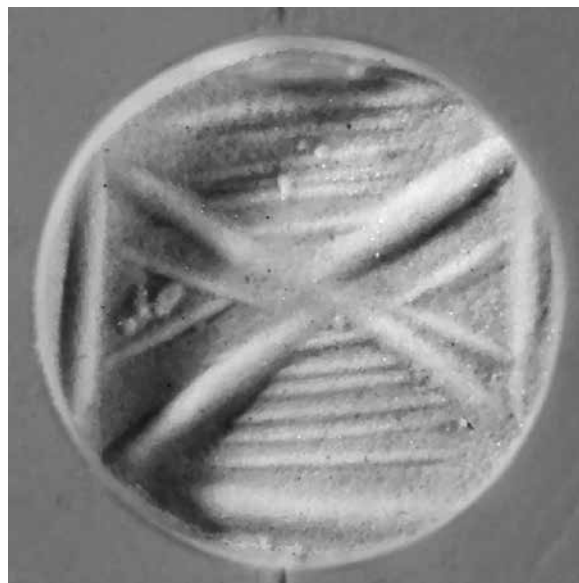
*Motif:* double axe with very strongly concave upper edge; straight sides; short central ›stem‹ and a series of diagonal lines within the blades. The motif is set vertically on the seal face.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the condition of the seal greatly hampers an evaluation of the motif and engraving technique. Double axes first appear as independent motifs (as opposed to script signs) in MM II (e.g. CMS II.2 no. 155c; CMS II.5 nos. 231. 233) but in these cases merely the outline is shown, with few internal details if any. Blades with internal ornament feature regularly in the MM III–LM I ›talismatic‹ style, with roughly 30 examples attested. None provides a close parallel for **S37**. For the motif see: DtS 102–110. 257–260 pl. XLI–II. See also in the CMS online, searching under ›Doppelaxt‹ and ›Talismanisch‹. Add: HM 2343a from Poros Π–1967 (Muhly 1992, 100. 141. 142 pl. 32 no. 302; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb) and HM 2813 from Knossos (Warren 1982/1983, 78. 83. 87 fig. 67). After the ›talismatic‹ style double axes no longer figure as individual motifs, but appear as equipment in cult scenes.





S37



S38

Further glass seals from the Poros tombs under consideration here are: **S4. S10. S11. S15. S21. S34 (?)**. **S40**. Note also HM 2348 from Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100 pl. 33 no. 304; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIb (colour). For the material see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* MM III–LM I

*Context:* T. V, Deposit, north sector, grids B4. Γ4. Γ5; layer 8. MM III

The pottery in layer 8 where **S37** was found is chiefly MM IIIA and MM IIIB: there are ridged white-spotted cups, bell cups with black rim zone, jugs with white stripes, a jug with white spiral and red stripes, monochrome straight-sided cups etc. The fill of layers 8–10 in both sectors of the deposit, north and south, seems actually to be uniform, containing mainly MM III pottery, mostly cups and jugs. Among other small pieces of jewellery in layer 8, a large cushion-shaped agate bead was found.

#### **S38** Lentoid (HM 3799)

*fig. 6*

Biconvex, although rather flat; string-hole vertical. Slight surface pitting on seal face and reverse; slight chipping on edge and at lower string-hole.

Dm 1.1 cm, Th 0.4 cm, upper SH 0.20 cm, lower SH 0.175 cm.

*Material:* blue chalcedony, translucent; pale blue, very homogenous colour; slightly ›waxy‹ feel.

*Motif:* linear motif: an X with upper and lower segments filled with horizontal lines; left and right segments filled with angled lines.

*Commentary and comparanda:* simple ornamental designs incorporating crosses have a long history in Minoan glyptic, but were rare in the Neopalatial period

when pictorial motifs predominated. The deposit in which **S38** was found provides a valuable terminus post quem non of LM IA for this piece. Moreover it helps to confirm the presumed LM I date for two further lentoids, without secure provenance, which provide important parallels in concept, if not in all details: CMS IV no. 222 (›Tsoustouros‹) and CMS VI no. 492 (›Agia Pelagia‹). Both are made of glass, engraved like a hard semi-precious stone; the same is true of HM 2067 (Galia). Broadly similar designs recur in LM IIIA1–2, but are limited to medium hard or even soft stones, such as creamy-white limestone (e.g. CMS II.4 no. 215; CMS VS1B no. 274) and calcite (not fluorite as given in the CMS; see Krzyszkowska 2018, 14–16 pl. 10d–f): CMS V no. 277; CMS VS1B nos. 224. 302; CMS VI nos. 496. 497.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. V, Deposit, north sector, grids A4. A5. B5. Γ4. Γ5; layer 5. MM III–LM I

Layer 5 of north sector where **S38** was found is mixed, containing MM III pottery and LM IA vases, such as a bridge-spouted jug with ripple ware and sherds with ripple, spirals and floral-reed motifs. A similar mixing of phases was attested in the south sector, layer 5 of the deposit (see **S35**).

#### **S39** Scarab (HM 3797)

*fig. 6*

String-hole along longitudinal axis. Some cracking on back; surface slightly worn; otherwise condition excellent.

L 1.5 cm, W 1.0 cm, Th 0.65 cm, SHs 0.175–0.20 cm.

*Material:* glazed steatite, probably hardened by exposure to heat; creamy white with some pale beige patches (evidently remains of glaze).



*Commentary and comparanda:* »very well cut; face design a mirror image with single border line; modified lunate, double suture lines, all legs fringed, leg junction at pronotum / elytra junction, somewhat naturalistic, deeply cut; interesting drilling? below junction« (J. Phillips).

Cf. HM 1757 (»Nipiditos«; Phillips 2008, II no. 481) although S39 is much smaller in size. Further scarabs from the Poros tombs under consideration here are: S8 and S23. Note also the Egyptian scarab (HM 3267) found in a settlement context at Poros: Dimopoulou 2000, 28 fig. 1.1; Phillips 2008, II, 236. 362 no. 483.

*Stylistic date:* »probably Second Intermediate Period« (J. Phillips)

*Context:* T. V, Deposit, south sector, grids A3. B2. B3. Γ1. Γ2. Γ3. Δ2; layer 4. MM III–LM I

Layer 4 where S39 was found is mixed, comprising MM III vases such as ridged white-spotted cups along with LM I pottery, e.g. a conglomerate small jug, sherds with reed decoration and spirals.

S39

## VI. TOMB ON LAONIKOU STREET (2002)

### Excavation and Contents

Tomb VI, discovered in 2002, was revealed, like Tombs II, IV and V, during the laying of a new water and sewage network by Herakleion Municipality. It was found on Laonikou Street, a small *cul-de-sac* off Spanakis Street, at the entrance to the 14<sup>th</sup> Primary School, in the schoolyard of which Tomb I had been discovered in 1986. The walls of the two tombs are less than 7 m apart at their closest point.

Tomb VI presents some features that set it apart from the other tombs of the central cemetery nucleus. One is its layout, with three chambers delimited by rock-cut partition »walls«. After the antechamber, the chambers are arranged in a three-lobed »cloverleaf« shape, the central chamber being more elongated. The smallest, northernmost chamber is more like a large niche in the north extension of the antechamber, and bones and important finds from disturbed burials were indeed found there, densely piled up in large quantities. Tomb VI is the only tomb of the group lacking a deposit. It is also the smallest, measuring around 53 m<sup>2</sup> or around 60 m<sup>2</sup>, if we include the inclined dromos with eight steps. Its use appears to mainly cover the Late Neopalatial period, LM IA and LM IB, as it lacks the mass of MM III pottery found in the other tombs.

Like the other tombs, Tomb VI was subject to extensive looting, probably also in the modern period, in spite of efforts to protect it at an unknown date by dumping four ashlar blocks, with sides up to 1.5 m long, in the dromos in front of the already breached entrance. In the central and south chambers only a few bones, vases and small finds, mainly clusters of beads, remained after the disturbance of the burials by looters. In the north chamber-niche and the extension of the antechamber up to the entrance of the central chamber, among the



Fig. 7 Poros, Tomb VI: Seals S40–S43, faces and profiles (scale ca. 2 : 1)

dense, extensive piles of bones from scattered burials, were found characteristic vessels and most of the funerary goods. These include gold earrings; one pin of silver, one of bronze, another of bone; dozens of necklace beads of gold, semi-precious stones and other materials, and part of an ivory plaque with a boxing scene.

Apart from seals S40–S42 and cylinder seal S43<sup>18</sup>, particularly noteworthy are the two signet rings and the small engraved pendant, all made of gold, found together in the same spot, among piles of bones in the north chamber-niche. These are the ›Divine Couple‹ signet ring with cult scene<sup>19</sup>; another gold signet ring depicting the epiphany of a male deity; and a small pendant in the shape of a miniature pyxis, engraved with a lion and ornamental motifs.

The LM IB pottery, such as the peculiar strainer with relief sea-shells, marks the last phase of use of the tomb.

## Catalogue

### S40 Cushion (HM 3806)

fig. 7

Biconvex; string-hole horizontal, although at slight angle. Small portion of seal face lost; damage near string-holes; surface rather porous and slightly worn; some surface deposit (greyish-white on face, yellowish-brown on reverse).

L 1.7 cm, W 1.15 cm, Th 0.55 cm, SHs 0.20 cm.

*Material:* glass, opaque with a few iridescent areas; royal blue.

*Motif:* recumbent lion in left profile on double ground-line. The lion's mouth is shown open, delineated by curving lines with a solid-dot indicating the nose; the eye is almond-shaped with a solid dot

<sup>18</sup> Rethemiotakis 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Rethemiotakis 2016/2017.





S40

within; short strokes and dots along and on the neck indicate the mane. The foreleg is stretched out in front of the animal; a hind-leg is apparently placed underneath the belly, although the condition of the seal obscures these elements. A long tail, terminating in a solid dot, curls over the animal's rump. The field above the lion is occupied by a double ›sky-line‹, which undulates downwards from the upper edge of the seal face toward the back of the lion.

*Commentary and comparanda:* although the main elements are relatively clear, the condition of the seal greatly hampers an evaluation of stylistic details. The lion itself – and the treatment of individual features such as head and mane – accord reasonably well with other LM I representations. But the lion's pose – recumbent with head facing forwards – is relatively rare, and chiefly confined to amygdaloids, some rendered in the Cut Style or close to it, e.g. CMS II.3 nos. 257. 346; CMS VS1A no. 144 (= CMS VS1A no. 163); CMS VI no. 363; CMS X nos. 132. 277a; CMS XII no. 208. Only two recumbent lions are depicted on cushions: one with back-turned head from a LM IA context in Mochlos House C.3 (Krzyszowska 2022a, no. IVA.326); the other, HM 2101, badly abraded from a LM IB context on the Royal Road, Knossos (Krzyszowska 2019, 490 f. pl. CLXXVIa). Both are made of serpentine. Note also a serpentine lentoid (HM 2772) from a LM IA context in the Unexplored Mansion: Betts 1984, 187 f. 191 pl. 186c (NP18).

The undulating ›sky-line‹ (if the identification is correct) is unparalleled in association with animals, and known instances of this rare convention are restricted to cult scenes: CMS II.3 no. 114; CMS II.6 nos. 1. 4; CMS V no. 199; CMS VS1A no. 133; CMS VS2 no. 106 (see also Krzyszowska 2010b, 180). In concept, however, possible (remote) parallels are the zig-zag lines shown above water birds on CMS II.3 no. 179 (serpentine cushion, ›Knossos‹) and above a lion on CMS II.3 no. 257 (carnelian Cut Style amygdaloid, Mochlos). There exists, however, the possibility that

the undulating lines are intended as ›hanging rock-work‹, in which case cf. CMS II.7 no. 69 (distant).

Further glass seals presented here are: S4. S10. S11. S15. S21. S34 (?). S37. Note also HM 2348 from Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100 pl. 33 no. 304; Krzyszowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIIb (colour). For further LM I seals with ›naturalistic‹ motifs see *Table 1*; for the material and dating see Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. VI, Central Chamber, grid B7, layer 1. LM I

The seal was found on the floor of the looted, almost empty Central Chamber, by a hemispherical LM IA cup with lustrous paint. At the find spot were recovered a small gold earring with three soldered granules, a fragmentary silver hook pin and beads of Egyptian blue.

#### S41 Lentoid (HM 3807)

*fig. 7*

Biconvex; string-hole horizontal. Some fracturing within the stone; slight chipping at string-holes; a little pitting on reverse; otherwise condition very good.

L 1.65 cm, W 1.6 cm, Th 0.7 cm, SHs 0.15–0.20 cm.

*Material:* amethyst, translucent; deep purple throughout

*Motif:* standing lion in left profile with back-turned head. A heavy curved line running from behind the eye (rendered as a large solid dot) to the upper jaw sets the head off from the neck and mane. The mouth is open: the muzzle is prominent, terminating in a small solid dot; the lower jaw a simple short line. Several roughly vertical strokes indicate the mane. The forelegs are straight and stocky, the

S41





hind-legs bent; the feet are rendered in a very cursory manner. A long tail, comprising two curving elements terminating in a solid dot, is held aloft above the lion's back. Beneath the lion's belly a plant motif terminating in three ›leaves‹. The motif is framed by curving lines parallel to the periphery of the seal face beneath, in front and behind the lion.

*Commentary and comparanda:* lions in a similar pose occur on several LM I lentoids, though none provides a close parallel: CMS II.3 nos. 122 (Porti), 152 (Malia), 302 (›Ierapetra‹); CMS II.6 no. 83; CMS XI no. 317. Note also several made of amethyst: CMS IS no. 168 (›Thebes‹); CMS III nos. 381 (amygdaloid, ›Apesokari‹) and 506 (three-sided prism with round faces). S41 is unusual in having a horizontal string-hole (typical for goats in the MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹ style; cf. also here S29) but rare in LM I lentoids depicting animals, where vertical string-holes are the norm. Whether this has any chronological significance or merely represents individual workshop practices is unclear. CMS II.3 nos. 122 and 152 (both medium hard limestone) also have horizontal string-holes, as does CMS IS no. 168 (amethyst).

The deep vibrant purple amethyst is comparable to that known to have occurred at Wadi el-Hudi in the Eastern Desert: Krzyszkowska 2005b; see also Discussion, below. For further LM I seals with ›naturalistic‹ motifs see *Table 1*.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. VI, North Chamber, north edge, grid H9, layer 1. LM I

The seal was found on the floor with sherds dating stylistically to LM IA, such as Vapheio-type cups, and to LM IB, such as sherds of a clay vessel with attached relief sea-shell.

#### S42 Lentoid (HM 3805)

fig. 7

Biconvex; string-hole vertical and very precise. Condition excellent; virtually workshop fresh.

L 1.85 cm, W 1.8 cm, Th 0.06 cm, SHs 0.020–0.225 cm.

*Material:* soft stone, opaque; jet-black in colour, only very slightly lighter in engraving; probably chlorite.

*Motif:* running goat in left profile with head facing forwards. Pointed muzzle terminates in small solid dot; a solid dot also marks the eye; a fairly thick horizontal line marks the ear. The two horns curve upwards and over the goat's back; tiny ›nicks‹ along their length indicate ribbing. The curvature of the neck, belly and rump add to sense of movement, as do the bent legs, indicated by tapering lines (in three cases terminating in solid dots). Across the belly ribs are faintly indicated; a strong contour line delineates the rump; the short tail extends horizontally.

*Commentary and comparanda:* an exceptionally fine example of a popular LM I *Bildthema* in soft stone; for discussion and examples see Müller 1995, 163. 164 fig. 11. Closest is CMS II.4 no. 181 (›Knossos‹);



S42

cf. also CMS II.3 no. 343; CMS II.4 no. 106 (Tylisos); CMS III no. 448; CMS IV nos. 292 and 303 (›Mesara‹); CMS VS1B no. 296 (Armenoi); CMS VI no. 432; CMS XII no. 275 (ribs clearly indicated).

See also here S7. For further LM I soft stone seals, see *Table 1*; also Discussion, below.

*Stylistic date:* LM I

*Context:* T. VI, Central Chamber, grid H6, layer 3. LM I

Only a few sherds were found with S42 in layer 3, among them a LM IA with spirals. A Vapheio-type cup of the same date and a hemispherical monochrome cup were found in the overlying layer 2. Other LM IA sherds of Vapheio-type cups were in adjacent grid squares, although with mixed debris from the Minoan settlement, such as the foot of a LM III champagne cup, a loom weight etc.

#### S43 Cylinder seal (HM 3793)

fig. 7

Cylinder; string-hole vertical. Condition excellent.

H 1.55 cm, Dm 0.065 cm, SHs 0.30 cm.

*Material:* haematite, opaque; blue-black.

*Motif:* the motif consists of four main elements; in the lower zone a griffin and wild goat; in the upper zone a bird and an acrobat; in the field a rosette. The griffin is shown in left profile, with beaked head and dotted eye; the body is smooth and relatively flat; the powerful wing is displayed with eight rows of feathers. The two forelegs of the creature extend to touch the hindquarters of the wild goat to the left, indicating that an attack scene is intended; by contrast the creature's hind-legs remain firmly fixed to the ground-line in a walking pose. The wild goat, in left profile, is shown in flying gallop, with head



S43

turned back to face the attacking griffin; forelegs are bent and hind-legs outstretched. The long horns are held erect; ears and ›beard‹ are shown; the sex is indicated. In the field to the left of the goat's neck is a large seven-petaled rosette, evidently a filling motif. Above, a bird is shown in right profile, with outstretched neck. Head and feathered wings are displayed above and beneath its rounded body; the eye is indicated by a solid dot; the tail is forked. The bird's beak almost touches the feet of the acrobat to its right. This figure, shown in left profile, adopts a highly contorted pose, bent sharply at the waist, so that head and buttocks nearly meet; the legs and arms are fully extended; a reverse somersault is evidently intended. The acrobat wears a loin-cloth, belted at waist; the torso is bare, with a breast apparently indicated; if so, the figure may be female. On the head, nose, eye and mouth are shown, as well as what appears to be short wig-like hair. The curvature of the torso echoes that of the upturned wing of the griffin below. The scene is framed by borderlines above and below.

*Commentary and comparanda:* the quality of the engraving is exceptionally fine, with details rendered in a very precise manner, notwithstanding the small scale of individual elements. While all can be readily paralleled in Minoan glyptic, their juxtaposition

on a cylinder seal of haematite, suggests a foreign origin or, at the very least, strong foreign influence; see Rethemiotakis 2007 for a thorough discussion, concluding that the piece is ›Syro-Minoan‹.

The existence of a diverse group of some 20 ›Cypro-Aegean‹ cylinders made of haematite, most examples probably dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> century B.C., has long been recognized (Pini 1980; Krzyszkowska 2005a, 302–304 illustration nos. 589–592). These frequently employ motifs that are Aegean in origin and executed in an Aegean manner, but deployed in syntax that seems more at home in the East Mediterranean. There are, however, a few examples that on grounds of context evidently pre-date the main ›Cypro-Aegean‹ group. These include two cylinders from Pylos–Routsi (CMS I nos. 284, 285, carnelian and agate, respectively), regarded as ›Cypro-Levantine‹ by Pini (see discussion in CMS VS3, p. 39 f.; also Krzyszkowska 2005c, 767 f.). Whatever their true origin, together with the new example from Poros (S43) these seals demonstrate that the ›international style‹, previously seen as a 14<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon, had earlier roots.

*Stylistic date:* LB I

*Context:* T. VI, North Chamber, grid Θ8, layer 2. LM I In spite of complete disturbance it is evident that S43 originally accompanied a rich burial, as confirmed by a bone pin and a dozen of beads made of gold, Egyptian blue and hard stones at the same spot on floor of the chamber. Although only a few, stylistically non-attributable sherds were found in layer 2 with S43, LM IA cups with decoration of spirals and floral motifs and plentiful sherds of the same date, as well as some belonging to LM IB, were collected in the overlying layer 1 / Θ8 and the adjacent grid squares, within a heap of mixed up bones and skulls from disturbed and looted burials.

*Bibliography:* Rethemiotakis 2007.

## DISCUSSION

The six tombs at Poros under consideration here have yielded a total of 43 seals, of which 39 are Minoan and four are imported pieces. For our understanding of Minoan glyptic the locally-made products constitute one of the most significant finds in the past 50 years<sup>20</sup>. Although the tombs show considerable disturbance through looting and their use for burials over prolonged periods of time, none was used for mortuary purposes after the end of LM IB (see above). The seals themselves reflect this: on stylistic grounds the latest seals are LM I or LM IB, the earliest MM II / III.

<sup>20</sup> Note also the discovery of ca. 50 seals of Prepalatial date at Moni Odigitria: Sbonias 2010. Over 60 seals, many multi-facial, ranging in date from EM II to MM II, have come to light in the cemetery of Petras (Siteias); excavations are on-going. Meanwhile see: Krzyszkowska 2012b; Krzyszkowska 2017; Krzyszkowska 2019, 489 pl. CLXXV (colour). The large LM IIIA–B cemetery at Armenoi near Rethymnon has yielded approximately 165 seals; most are datable to LM IIIA, but some 20 % are LM I or earlier: Krzyszkowska 2019, 492 f. pl. CLXXVIIb (colour).

Since the catalogue entries provide detailed commentaries on individual pieces and comparanda, the remarks here will focus on the importance of the seals collectively, with special attention to materials and style groups. Unless otherwise specified, the comments relate solely to the Minoan seals.

## Materials

One of the most striking aspects of the Poros seals considered here is the overwhelming use of hard semi-precious stones, as well as glass, also a hard material. Only eight are made from soft local stones, i.e. chlorite or serpentine, amounting to roughly 20 % of the Minoan seals. On the face of it, this compares closely to the proportion of soft stone seals known from LM IB sealings<sup>21</sup>. However, based on the surviving repertoire, soft stone seals seem somewhat *underrepresented* in the sealing deposits. And this is certainly true of the Poros tombs, if we factor in the signet rings and gold seals, summarized above but not included in this study: then soft stone sinks to a mere 15 %. It is often assumed that seals made of semi-precious stones are indicative of high(er) social status, inasmuch as the materials themselves were often imported and, owing to their hardness (Mohs 6–7), required sophisticated rotary technology to work them<sup>22</sup>. Thus the large number of hard seals in the Poros tombs accords well with other finds of rich jewellery and fine pottery (see above). It is, however, worth stressing that seals of soft stones engraved with hand-held tools varied tremendously in quality: several in the Poros tombs display very fine workmanship indeed (**S6**, **S16** and **S42**). Also worth noting is a striking disparity between seals found in the tombs and those recovered from excavations in the settlement where soft stones predominate. These include clear workshop contexts with seals in varying stages of manufacture, as well as fragments of chlorite and serpentine, and pieces of semi-precious stones, such as agate, amethyst, carnelian, red jasper and rock crystal<sup>23</sup>. But sadly, notwithstanding these important finds, there are no means of determining whether any of the tomb seals were made at Poros itself.

Carnelian occupies pride of place among the tomb seals, with some ten examples; indeed throughout Aegean glyptic this is the most commonly used semi-precious stone<sup>24</sup>. At Poros carnelian was used for seals of MM III–LM I date, including seals of the ›talismatic‹ style or close to it (**S1–S3**, **S9**), one exceptionally fine ›naturalistic‹ piece (**S28**), as well as several examples of the LM I Cut Style (**S17–S20**, **S22**). In colour they range from fiery orange-red to deep blood-red, well within the hues normally associated with carnelians<sup>25</sup>. Remarkably, six or seven seals were made of glass, which in the early Late Bronze Age was invariably treated as a hard semi-precious stone and engraved with rotary technology<sup>26</sup>. At Poros the material was used for the ›talismatic‹ style (**S10**), the Cut Style (**S21**) and four

<sup>21</sup> Krzyszkowska 2012a, 740: 20 % soft, 40 % hard, 31 % metal signet rings; 9 % unidentifiable (the calculations excluded House A at Kato Zakros).

<sup>22</sup> Krzyszkowska 2005a, 81–85; Krzyszkowska 2011, 439 f.; Krzyszkowska 2012a, esp. 739 f.

<sup>23</sup> Most notably in the Sanoudakis plot: Dimopoulou 1997, 436, pl. CLXXId CLXXIib. e; Dimopoulou 2000a; Dimopoulou 2000b, 106 f. no. 84.

<sup>24</sup> Krzyszkowska 2012a, 739. Based on a sample of ca. 2500 hard stone seals ranging in date from MM II (the inception of hard stone engraving) until LB IIIA2 (when hard stone engraving ceased), carnelian accounts for ca. 30 %. Note that these include seals originally published as ›sard‹, a term no longer employed by the CMS: Krzyszkowska 2010a, 252 f.

Agate (including seals formerly termed ›sardonyx‹ and ›onyx‹) accounted for 25 %; other semi-precious stones are much rarer.

<sup>25</sup> Krzyszkowska 2005a, 81–83; Krzyszkowska 2020b, 257 f.; see also above n. 24.

<sup>26</sup> Pini 1981, 76 f.; Pini 1999, 331; Krzyszkowska 2005a, 12. 198 illustration nos. 381 (= C32), 385 (both Cut Style). The identification of the Poros seals as glass and/or vitreous is based on macroscopic examination, aided by large-format colour digital photography, effectively providing magnifications of × 20–25 (before on-screen enlargement). Non-destructive testing might be informative, but no comparative data yet exist for Aegean seals made of glass (cf. remarks in CMS VI p. 20). To a greater or lesser extent most

seals bearing ›naturalistic‹ motifs (**S4**, **S11**, **S15** and **S40**). Significant degradation of the glass has occurred in most cases. While **S40** is a vibrant royal blue and the reverse of **S4** is a deep midnight blue, others are to a greater or lesser extent discoloured, usually a pale greyish-blue or beige. None is translucent, although several retain small iridescent flecks or patches. Noteworthy is the marked discrepancy that can be observed between the engraved and unengraved surfaces, the latter generally displaying considerably less degradation. The concentration of glass seals at Poros is especially striking, comparable to the *total* of LM I examples found elsewhere in the island<sup>27</sup>. Two further seals **S34** and **S37** from the Poros tombs are here classed as ›vitreous‹, since their condition does not allow for an absolutely secure identification. The first is conceivably frit<sup>28</sup>, the second more likely to be glass. If one or other is indeed true glass, this would potentially represent the earliest known occurrence in the Aegean, since both were found in deposits with MM IIIA–B pottery<sup>29</sup>.

Other hard materials – agate, amethyst, blue chalcedony, red jasper and rock crystal – are attested far less frequently in the Poros tombs, with only two or three examples each. The two made from amethyst are especially interesting, inasmuch as they display very different hues: **S24** is a pale lilac colour, whereas **S41** is an intense deep violet. While there exist several potential sources in Egypt for the former, deep violet amethyst seems to have occurred solely at Wadi el-Hudi in the Eastern Desert, a source exploited during the Middle Kingdom<sup>30</sup>. At Poros the fragment of a vase made from pale amethyst, as well as unfinished beads, were discovered in the Sanoudakis plot, together with other raw materials mentioned above<sup>31</sup>. By contrast the deep violet variety used for **S41** is attested in a necklace from Tomb Π–1967, which includes beads of garnet as well as amethyst<sup>32</sup>. Amethyst was used only rarely for seals in the Aegean Bronze Age, accounting for barely 4 % of the hard stone repertoire; the two seals from the Poros tombs thus make a very welcome addition<sup>33</sup>.

Before we leave the subject of materials, it is worth pointing out several absences among the hard semi-precious stones: green jasper, haematite, *lapis lacedaimonius*, *lapis lazuli*. Green jasper was very popular in MM II, favoured for three- and four-sided prisms, as well as *Petschafte* (loop signets), many bearing inscriptions in Cretan Hieroglyphic<sup>34</sup>. Its use continued into MM III–LM I, especially for seals of the ›talismanic‹ style, but seemingly became infrequent later. Its absence in the Poros tombs may be nothing more than chance: an especially fine discoid of green jasper was recovered in the settlement<sup>35</sup>. Although **S43** is made

of the Poros seals identified as glass or vitreous are degraded, often with surface deposits; these factors could well skew any test results. When fresh, glass has a value of Mohs 5–6, and hence is engraved like hard semi-precious stones. However, lower values (e.g. Mohs 3–4) are likely when glass is degraded; variations can even occur in different parts of the same seal. Thus hardness is not necessarily diagnostic in identifying glass.

<sup>27</sup> To the total at Poros must be added HM 2348 from a LM IA context in Tomb Π–1967: Muhly 1992, 100 pl. 33 no. 304; Krzyszkowska 2019, 491 pl. CLXXVIb (colour). The context date was wrongly stated to be MM IIIA in Pini 1981, 62 no. 80. Other LM I seals of glass are: CMS II.3 no. 78; CMS II.4 no. 119; CMS IV no. 222; CMS VI nos. 251, 262, 492; HM 2067 and HM 2116 for which Krzyszkowska 2019, 490 f. pl. CLXXVIa (colour).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. the MM II *Petschafte* (HM 2460) from Malia Quartier Mu which retains a vibrant blue colour: Poursat 1980, 178 f. no. 248. The material is likely to

be frit (Egyptian blue) rather than faience, as published. For these materials: Nicholson and Peltenburg 2000, 177 f.; Nicholson and Henderson 2000, 205.

<sup>29</sup> For glass in the Near East during the late MBA, see: Moorey 1994, 192–196. In Egypt it appears that imported glass (in ingot form) was used well into Dynasty XVIII, with local manufacture only developing later: Nicholson and Henderson 2000, 195 f.

<sup>30</sup> Krzyszkowska 2005b, 120 f. with references.

<sup>31</sup> Dimopoulou 1997, 436; Dimopoulou 2000b, 106 f. no. 84:2a.

<sup>32</sup> Muhly 1992, 92, 128 f. no. 258 pl. 27; Dimopoulou 2000b, 115 no. 95; Krzyszkowska 2005b, 122 f. and n. 26 for the garnet beads; these strongly suggest that the necklace was a ready-made import.

<sup>33</sup> Krzyszkowska 2005b, 127 f. (list); Krzyszkowska 2012a, 739.

<sup>34</sup> Krzyszkowska 2005a, 82 f. 123; Krzyszkowska 2010a, 253 f.; Krzyszkowska 2012b, 149, 151.

<sup>35</sup> Dimopoulou 2000a, 33 no. 8 fig. 1.



of haematite, this cylinder seal is almost certainly an import. In Aegean glyptic the material was used from MM III–LM I through LB IIIA2<sup>36</sup>. Also absent among the Minoan seals is *lapis lacedaimonius*, but in glyptic this is a rare material represented by just over 50 examples; its sole source is located near Krokeai in Laconia<sup>37</sup>. By far the most rare semi-precious stone used for Aegean seals is *lapis lazuli* with barely 20 examples spanning MM II–LB IIIA1<sup>38</sup>. Thus its absence from the Poros tombs, while regrettable, is in no way significant.

## Style groups

Virtually all the Poros seals fit comfortably within known style groups in Minoan glyptic, yet it must be stressed that few close parallels can be mustered for individual pieces. This not only highlights the diversity of the repertoire, but also supports the view that only a tiny proportion of the original output is extant today<sup>39</sup>. The remarks below are selective in nature, and aim primarily to draw together some of the more detailed information found in the Catalogue concerning individual pieces. *Table 1* provides a summary of style groups and dating.

### *Seals of the ›architectural‹ group*

The earliest Minoan seals found in the six tombs under consideration here can be readily attributed to the MM II–III ›architectural‹ group, so named because Sir Arthur Evans believed that the motifs were »conventionalized representations of architectural façades«, characteristically showing masonry and doorways<sup>40</sup>. Although Paul Yule attempted to make descriptions more neutral by introducing the expression »tectonic ornament«<sup>41</sup>, the CMS retains the term ›architectural‹, a practice followed here. The group comprises approximately 160 examples, which occur in both soft and hard stones<sup>42</sup>. The latter often display considerable technical virtuosity with engravers rising to the challenges of working with the lapidary lathe to which cutting wheels of varying dimensions were attached<sup>43</sup>. Worth singling out for special mention here is the rock crystal discoid **S25**, which brings to 20 the number of ›architectural‹ seals made from this material. Although now badly damaged, it must once have been a very fine piece. Moreover the motif, based on a Π-shaped element, is so close in concept and execution to those on CMS II.2 no. 275 and CMS IX no. 36 that it is entirely likely all three were by the same hand<sup>44</sup>. A Π-motif is likewise found on **S33**, but does not display

<sup>36</sup> Krzyszkowska 2010a, 250. 253 f.

<sup>37</sup> Three are Neopalatial in date, all ›talismanic‹: CMS VS1A no. 333; CMS VII no. 46; HM 3080. Generally: Krzyszkowska 2005a, 123. 196, cover and illustration no. C37.

<sup>38</sup> Krzyszkowska 2005a, 83. Several examples are datable to the Neopalatial period either by context or on stylistic grounds: CMS II.3 no. 24; CMS III no. 396; HM 2092 and HM 3060; British Museum Greece and Rome 1897,0401.620 (three-sided prism, ›talismanic‹). For HM 2092: Krzyszkowska 2019, 490 f. pl. CLXXVIa (colour).

<sup>39</sup> Although the proportion may vary from one period to another, overall the figure is probably well under 5%. The lack of progress in identifying the output of particular workshops or individual hands merely reinforces this point: Krzyszkowska 2005a, 1, 324–329.

<sup>40</sup> Evans 1921, 564 f. fig. 411; Kenna (1960, 42 f. 110 with cat. no. 52) perpetuated the terminology: he asserted that the motifs showed architectural features and wall designs comparable to those found in the faience House Mosaics.

<sup>41</sup> Yule 1981, 145 f. 173. 220; also brief comments in Krzyszkowska 2005a, 87.

<sup>42</sup> Exact numbers are hard to offer, since attributions vary. Pini 2007, 229 (lists); Krzyszkowska 2015b (dating).

<sup>43</sup> Krzyszkowska 2005a, 11. 83–85. 87 fig. 5.1 and illustration no. 25.

<sup>44</sup> Also conceivably CMS VI no. 170 (= Kenna 1960, no. 157) said to be from ›Palaikastro‹, which Pini (2007, 232) groups with CMS II.2 no. 275 and CMS IX no. 36 (for the latter, see Krzyszkowska 2015b).

style group & stylistic date	seal shape	material	tomb	cat. no.	HM no.
MM II–III ›architectural‹	discoid	amethyst	Tomb III	S24	3561
MM II–III ›architectural‹	discoid	rock crystal	Tomb III	S25	3558
MM II–III ›architectural‹	cushion	chlorite	Tomb IV	S30	3795
MM II–III ›architectural‹	amygdaloid	agate	Tomb V	S32	3800
MM II–III ›architectural‹	discoid	hard stone	Tomb V	S33	3802
MM II–III ›architectural‹	discoid	vitreous (frit?)	Tomb V	S34	3804
MM III–LM I (›architectural‹ and ›talismanic‹ features)	lentoid	carnelian	Tomb I	S1	3230
MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹	lentoid	carnelian	Tomb I	S2	3228
MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹	amygdaloid	carnelian	Tomb I	S3	3226
MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹	3-sided prism	carnelian	Tomb II	S9	3544
MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹	amygdaloid	glass	Tomb II	S10	3555
MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹	low cylinder	agate	Tomb III	S26	3560
MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹	lentoid	serpentine (?)	Tomb III	S27	3559
MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹	lentoid	red jasper	Tomb V	S35	3798
MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹	amygdaloid	rock crystal	Tomb V	S36	3801
MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹ (?)	cushion	vitreous (glass?)	Tomb V	S37	3803
MM III–LM I ›naturalistic‹	amygdaloid	glass	Tomb II	S11	3546
MM III–LM I ›naturalistic‹	lentoid	carnelian	Tomb III	S28	3557
MM III–LM I ›naturalistic‹	amygdaloid	blue chalcedony	Tomb IV	S31	3796
LM I ornamental (hard)	lentoid	blue chalcedony	Tomb V	S38	3799
LM I Cut Style	amygdaloid	carnelian	Tomb II	S17	3548
LM I Cut Style	amygdaloid	carnelian	Tomb II	S18	3551
LM I Cut Style	lentoid	carnelian	Tomb II	S19	3553
LM I Cut Style	amygdaloid	carnelian	Tomb II	S20	3542
LM I Cut Style	amygdaloid	glass	Tomb II	S21	3554
LM I Cut Style	amygdaloid	carnelian	Tomb II	S22	3545
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (hard)	amygdaloid	glass	Tomb I	S4	3229
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (hard)	amygdaloid	red jasper	Tomb II	S12	3547
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (hard)	lentoid	agate	Tomb II	S13	3552
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (hard)	lentoid	glass	Tomb II	S15	3543
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (hard)	lentoid	red jasper	Tomb III	S29	3556
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (hard)	cushion	glass	Tomb VI	S40	3806
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (hard)	lentoid	amethyst	Tomb VI	S41	3807
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (soft)	lentoid	serpentine	Tomb I	S5	3231
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (soft)	lentoid	serpentine	Tomb I	S6	3227
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (soft)	lentoid, frag.	serpentine	Tomb I	S7	3233
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (soft)	lentoid	serpentine	Tomb II	S14	3549
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (soft)	lentoid	serpentine	Tomb II	S16	3550
LM I ›naturalistic‹ (soft)	lentoid	chlorite	Tomb VI	S42	3805
Dynasty XI	scarab	glazed steatite	Tomb I	S8	3225
Dynasty XIII	scarab	glazed steatite	Tomb II	S23	3541
probably 2 <sup>nd</sup> Intermediate	scarab	glazed steatite	Tomb V	S39	3797
LB Syro-Minoan	cylinder	haematite	Tomb VI	S43	3793

Table 1: Poros tomb seals listed by style group and stylistic date

the exceptionally fine detail found on the examples just mentioned. The reason probably lies in the nature of the stone; although hard, it lacks the homogeneity found in macro-crystalline quartzes, including rock crystal. The amygdaloid of banded agate **S32** presents a truly exquisite example of an ›architectural‹ motif, in which the seal shape is both emphasized and enhanced by the vertical ›Bandlinien‹ and, in particular, by the superb placement of diagonals at the widest part of the face. Only six other hard stone amygdaloids belong to this group (see Catalogue): **S32** now ranks as one of the finest. Finally, **S34** is noteworthy as the sole example in a vitreous material (see above), while the carnelian lentoid **S1** seems to represent a transition from the ›architectural‹ group proper to the MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹ style.

A firm date of the inception of ›architectural‹ motifs is provided by the impressions of three different seals, found in the MM IIB sealing deposit at Phaistos, but production seems to have continued well into MM III<sup>45</sup>. At Poros seals of the ›architectural‹ group are confined to three tombs: two examples came to light in Tomb III in deposits containing MM IIB and MM III pottery (**S24**, **S25**). Others were recovered from contexts in Tomb IV (**S30**) and Tomb V (**S32–S34**); in the latter, associated pottery is datable to MM IIIA–B. Thus the seals were evidently deposited in tombs fairly close to their date of manufacture.

### *Seals of the ›talismanic‹ style*

Nine seals from the Poros tombs can be readily attributed to the MM III–LM I ›talismanic‹ style: six made of hard semi-precious stones (**S2**, **S3**, **S9**, **S26**, **S35**, **S36**), two of glass (**S10**, **S37**) and one of a medium hard stone (**S27**). The term ›talismanic‹ goes back to Sir Arthur Evans, who believed that certain ›bead-seals‹ of MM III–LM I date served a talismanic or amuletic purpose, bringing their owners strength, good fortune, or perhaps warding off evil<sup>46</sup>. In fact, as convincingly demonstrated by Onassoglou, the ›talismanic‹ seals simply represent a large style group, defined chiefly by material and technique, with motifs often drawn from the natural world, and confined to a specific period in glyptic development<sup>47</sup>. Altogether roughly 900 examples are known, ca. 95 % made from hard semi-precious stones. The style relies heavily on rotary technology, as did the MM II–III ›architectural‹ group; but now in addition to cutting wheels, lavish use is made of solid and tubular drills. Moreover, it is the rapid application of these tools – without any attempt at smoothing or modelling to produce ›naturalistic‹ forms – that is a key characteristic of the ›talismanic‹ style.

In shape, material and technique the ›talismanics‹ found in the Poros tombs all fit comfortably into the extant repertoire, and many subjects are also familiar: a spouted jug, birds, fish, an octopus, a papyrus and palm, frequently accompanied by subsidiary ›sprays‹ and ›border clumps‹<sup>48</sup>. Yet the motifs themselves – the manner in which these familiar subjects are depicted – find surprisingly few close parallels, a fact all the more remarkable given the size of the repertoire. This suggests that the engravers working in this style had considerable freedom to invent and innovate. Indeed the three-sided prism **S9** offers a compelling example. While the jug on face (a) is entirely typical; the long-necked water bird on face (b) has no convincing parallels; and the arrow or dart on face (c) is unique. Or one could point to the highly unusual way the palm on **S36** has been rendered; a distant parallel is offered

<sup>45</sup> Phaistos: CMS II.5 nos. 242–244 (probably made by hard stone discoids). Several ›architectural‹ motifs occur on lentoids (e.g. CMS VI no. 167; CMS VII no. 220), a shape not attested before MM III, suggesting that output straddled the transition from Protopalatial to Neopalatial. See also Krzyszkowska 2015b.

<sup>46</sup> Evans 1921, 672–675; Evans 1935, 445–450. 541–543.

<sup>47</sup> DtS passim; Krzyszkowska 2005a, 133–137; Krzyszkowska 2016, 117 f.

<sup>48</sup> For these elements: Krzyszkowska 2010b, 173.

by the trees on **S31**, a fine ›naturalistic‹ representation of contemporary date. Does this suggest some cross-fertilization at workshop level, or even the work of a single craftsman, who was able and willing to work in several styles<sup>49</sup>?

Although Evans dated ›talismatic‹ seals to the transition from MM IIIB to LM IA style on the basis of examples found at Sphoungaras, the CMS now invariably assigns a LM I date to the style<sup>50</sup>. While there is little doubt that output continued throughout LM IA, the evidence from Poros now helps to confirm that the inception of the style lies firmly in MM III<sup>51</sup>. Three seals (**S27**, **S36** and **S37**) were recovered from deposits in Tombs III and V containing only MM IIIA–B pottery and none later.

### *Seals of the Cut Style*

In terms of technique, the Cut Style is a natural successor to the MM III–LM I ›talismatic‹ style, being heavily reliant on rotary technology, but making far greater use of cutting wheels than of drills. The repertoire of motifs also changed significantly: in place of cult equipment and sea creatures, engravers working in the Cut Style favoured running goats with hairy backs, lions with shaggy manes (**S17**, **S18**), griffins (**S19**) and birds with outstretched wings (**S20**, **S21**); water birds are relatively rare (**S22**)<sup>52</sup>. Few are closely paralleled in the repertoire apart from **S20**, which offers an excellent comparison for a seal said to come from a chamber tomb at Agia Pelagia<sup>53</sup>. So close are they in concept and execution that they are likely to have originated in the same workshop, if not the same hand. This observation is significant because in a well-defined repertoire of some 240 pieces very few small clusters have been isolated that might indicate the output of specific workshops<sup>54</sup>. In other words, even among the Cut Style considerable diversity existed in how engravers chose to render given motifs.

In recent years significant progress has been made in dating the Cut Style. The *floruit* of the style was once believed to lie in LM/LH II, with output perhaps continuing into LM/LH IIIA. However, new examples from pure LM IB contexts demonstrate beyond doubt that the Cut Style was in existence earlier than supposed, created when the ›talismatic‹ style was on the wane<sup>55</sup>. Moreover the numerical discrepancy between the ›talismatic‹ and Cut styles could suggest that production of the latter was fairly short-lived, say from late in LM IA through LM IB. Unfortunately the six Cut Style from Poros, all found in Tomb II, do not greatly help to refine the chronology of the style, inasmuch as none comes from a closely-datable deposit. It is, however, interesting to observe that two of the Cut Style seals (**S19** and **S22**) – both very ›fresh‹ – were found together with a battered and abraded ›talismatic‹ (**S9**) in a disturbed burial along the west wall of Chamber B (see also above).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. CMS VII no. 65, a bifacial lentoid, with ›naturalistic‹ bull on one face and a ›talismatic‹ motif on the other: Krzyszkowska 2011, 442 f. fig. 2a. b.

<sup>50</sup> Evans 1921, 672–675. The LM I date appears consistently in the CMS online where dating by Pini supersedes that which appeared in early volumes of the series. Cf. Krzyszkowska 2005a, 133–137, preferring MM III–LM I.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. CMS VS3 no. 390, a ›proto-talismatic‹ seal from Akrotiri found in a Middle Cycladic C context

(= MM IIIA): Karnava 2018, 17–19. 64. 244, S4.

<sup>52</sup> Krzyszkowska 2005a, 201–203; Krzyszkowska 2020a; Krzyszkowska 2022b, 86–88 (repertoire and technique), 90 f. 92. 93 (waterbirds). For dating see below and n. 55.

<sup>53</sup> CMS VI no. 272: see Catalogue for further details.

<sup>54</sup> Pini 2000, 217.

<sup>55</sup> Krzyszkowska 2020a, 282 f.; Krzyszkowska 2022a; Krzyszkowska 2022b, 85. 91 f.



*Seals with ›naturalistic‹ motifs*

In Neopalatial glyptic seals bearing ›naturalistic‹ motifs constitute a rather loose grouping, which displays considerable variation in how stylistic features are rendered. Engravers often succeeded in depicting anatomical forms with considerable assurance and devised poses that conveyed a sense of movement and life. That said the repertoire displays huge disparities in the technical and aesthetic sense. The finest, including some found at Poros, may well have been special commissions from master craftsmen. These include two remarkable seals of Early Neopalatial date: **S28** and **S31**<sup>56</sup>. The first is an exceptionally accomplished piece, depicting a wild cat leaping through a lush marshy landscape. Wild cats are extremely rare in Aegean glyptic and apart from **S28** are always shown hunting birds (see Catalogue). Here, as on a relatively small number of MM III–LM I seals, we are dealing with a true landscape setting, where the reeds form an integral part of the scene and are not mere filling ornaments<sup>57</sup>. Another landscape setting occurs on **S31** where a wild goat appears to spring out from within (or behind) a thicket of trees. The engraver has deftly conveyed the action by showing only the forequarters of the animal; this unusual pose is echoed on a contemporary ring stone, where a lion springs out from a clump of tall grasses (see Catalogue). Also noteworthy are the stylized trees on **S31**, for which no close parallels exist (although see above under **S36**). Owing to its condition the glass amygdaloid **S11** is hard to date precisely, but comparanda suggest MM III–LM I is very likely (see Catalogue). Originally the glass would have been dark blue in colour, a point worth noting inasmuch as there seems to be a close correlation between depictions of water birds and stones that are blue-grey or blue-green in colour<sup>58</sup>.

While the remaining ›naturalistic‹ seals in hard materials can be safely regarded as LM I products, our present knowledge does not permit fine distinctions to be drawn between LM IA and LM IB glyptic<sup>59</sup>. Here it is worth singling out the glass cushion **S40**, with its highly unusual sky-line above a recumbent lion; the LM IA cup found with it in Tomb VI provides a most welcome indication for dating the motif (see also Catalogue). But the griffin on the glass amygdaloid **S4** adopts a pose comparable to those executed in the Cut Style; hence for this piece a LM IB date might be more appropriate. The same is also true for the now-damaged amygdaloid of red jasper **S12**, depicting a wounded bull; and the fine agate lentoid **S13**, bearing a contorted deer. The poses and rendering of anatomical details on these are indicative of an advanced stage in Neopalatial glyptic. But it must be stressed that these are mere suggestions, based on a subjective assessment of glyptic development, rather than on incontrovertible evidence. These three pieces (**S4**, **S12**, **S13**) were recovered in Tomb II. Sadly none from meaningful contexts.

Neopalatial seals of hard semi-precious stone bearing ›naturalistic‹ motifs are often unique or have few close comparanda, an observation that applies to the new examples from the Poros tombs. By contrast numerous LM I soft stone seals belong to readily-definable groups, where the basic motif occurs repeatedly, although details differ, sometimes considerably. At Poros this is true of **S6**, an unusually large and fine example of a ›Chimaera‹ composition, known from a dozen soft stone examples (see Catalogue). Running goats are even more popular in the LM I soft stone repertoire, attested at Poros by **S42**, carefully engraved and almost workshop fresh. Seals depicting female ›adorants‹, either singly or in

<sup>56</sup> The latest pottery associated with **S28** in T. III is MM IIIB, while **S31** was found with a monochrome MM IIIB–LM IA cup in the chamber of T. IV (see Catalogue for details). Hence the seals appear to have been deposited close to their date of manufacture.

<sup>57</sup> Krzyszkowska 2010b, 173–176.

<sup>58</sup> Krzyszkowska 2010b, 176.

<sup>59</sup> Krzyszkowska 2019, 490.

procession, constitute another common motif among LM I soft stone seals, with a notable concentration in the Knossos area<sup>60</sup>: **S16** is one of the finest recovered to date. The glass lentoid **S15** is the only other seal at Poros which depicts a female figure<sup>61</sup>, here in association with a rampant lion. Both were found in Tomb II and although contexts were disturbed, associated material suggests a LM IA date.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although relatively few of the new Poros seals come from closely-datable deposits, the tombs themselves were excavated with great care and the finds all carefully documented (see above). Thus they provide an impressive addition to the glyptic repertoire, which is still bedevilled by far too many pieces lacking a secure provenance<sup>62</sup>. In the Poros tombs high quality seals constitute the overwhelming majority, with many being truly outstanding in the technical and / or aesthetic sense; in consequence they greatly enrich the glyptic repertoire. Here it is also worth observing that among the Minoan seals there are no clear ›antiques‹, predating the period during which the tombs were in use. Taken together with the deposits for which ceramic evidence *is* available, this suggests that the seals which accompanied their owners at death were often more or less contemporary products<sup>63</sup>. Yet questions inevitably remain. It is, of course, impossible to gauge how many seals may have been lost to looting in ancient and modern times<sup>64</sup>. But given that the six tombs were used repeatedly for burials over extended periods of time, the 43 seals recovered does not seem an especially large quantity<sup>65</sup>. Does this mean that seal ownership was relatively limited among the population using the tombs? Or does it suggest that seals did *not* invariably remain with their owners at death? And if not, why not? Thus notwithstanding the great strides made during the past century regarding glyptic style and iconography, many challenges remain in understanding the role played by seals in Minoan society. For the Neopalatial period the paucity of seals from mortuary contexts has meant that hitherto we have been overly dependent on evidence from sealing deposits and to a lesser extent from settlements. The new evidence from the Poros tombs now helps to redress the balance.

*Herakleion, Crete*  
*London*

*Nota Dimopoulou*  
*Olga Krzyszkowska*

<sup>60</sup> Krzyszkowska 2012a, 744 pl. CLXXVIa; Krzyszkowska 2020b, 259 f. fig. 2. See also Catalogue for comparanda in other materials.

<sup>61</sup> Female figures are, of course, found on the gold signet rings: Dimopoulou and Rethemiotakis 2000; Rethemiotakis and Dimopoulou 2003; Rethemiotakis 2016/2017; and a fourth ring, as yet unpublished.

<sup>62</sup> Krzyszkowska 2005a, 329; Krzyszkowska 2011, 439.

<sup>63</sup> A pattern observed elsewhere during MM II and LM I: Krzyszkowska 2019, 488–491.

<sup>64</sup> Seals recovered during the clearance of earlier burials or deliberate looting in antiquity may well have been pressed into service again, remaining in circulation until their final deposition during LM II–III or later: Krzyszkowska 2019, 491–494 pls. CLXXVII. CLXXVIII (colour).

<sup>65</sup> In at least one case, a burial seems to have been accompanied by three seals: **S9**, **S19** and **S22** (see above). Of course to the total of 43 pieces presented here (39 Minoan seals, three imported scarabs and one cylinder seal, also probably imported) must be added four signet rings of gold, several of silver and two gold seals (see above).

Sources of illustrations: All photographs (whether black-and-white or colour) are by Olga Krzyszkowska. Note that even digital colour photography only provides an approximation of the actual hues of the seals; cf. Krzyszkowska 2005a, 425. The photograph of impression **S43** is by Ilias Iliadis.

ADDRESSES

NOTA DIMOPOULOU

9 Marogiorgi

71201 Herakleion, Crete

Greece

E-Mail: notadimo@gmail.com

OLGA KRZYSZKOWSKA

Institute of Classical Studies

Senate House, Malet Street

London WC1E 7HU

United Kingdom

E-Mail: olgak@sas.ac.uk

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