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ScapeCon 2022

Towards an archaeology of fragmentation in the Aegean Bronze Age

Edited by Thérèse Claeys, Louis Dautais, Roxane Dubois, Killian Regnier, Evgenia Tsafou, Daniele Vendramin & Diana Wolf

PUL PRESSES UNIVERSITAIRES DE LOUVAIN

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http://pul.uclouvain.be
Registration of copyright: D/2024/9964/46
ISBN: 978-2-39061-527-9
ISBN PDF version: 978-2-39061-528-6
Printed in Belgium by CIACO scrl – printer number 107582

Cover design: Hélène Grégoire
Cover Image: assemblage of sherds from Sissi excavations (© Gavin McGuire)
Original ScapeCon logo drawing: © Franziska Fritzsche
Volume set in Adobe InDesign by Killian Regnier. Email: killian.regnier@uclouvain.be
Proofreading of English texts by Hilary Tresidder. Email: hilarytresidder@hotmail.co.uk

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With financial support from FNRS, INCAL and CEMA

Contents

ScapeCon is an international conference series aimed specifically at early career scholars, including MA and PhD students. It is organised by and for junior researchers with the aim of providing a platform for them as they take their initial steps into the academic realm, and of facilitating the exploration and dissemination of their research on the Aegean Bronze Age within an encouraging and supportive atmosphere. The series began in 2018, in a hybrid format, at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, entitled 'No (e)scape? Towards a Relational Archaeology of Man, Nature, and Thing.' At this inaugural gathering, attendees expressed a common desire for continuity, promptly resolving to organise a subsequent conference in 2019 at the University of Poznan, Poland, exploring the topic 'No (e)scape? Society, Environment, and Artifacts Entrapped.' Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the series persevered, holding its third meeting remotely in 2020 at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands, entitled 'No (e)scape? Breaking Boundaries: Negotiating Change in the Aegean Bronze Age.' Subsequently, a hybrid fourth conference took place in 2021 at the University of Rethymnon, Greece, with the theme 'No (e)scape? (R)evolutions: In Search of Radical-Scapes in the Aegean Bronze Age.' As junior researchers affiliated with the Louvain-la-Neuve-based Aegean Interdisciplinary Research Studies (AEGIS) group, we were honoured to host the fifth ScapeCon at UCLouvain in 2022. This meeting explored the topic 'No (e)scape from Bits and Pieces: Towards an Archaeology of Fragmentation in the Aegean Bronze Age.'

Previous ScapeCon proceedings

Heidelberg 2018

No (e)scape? Towards a Relational Archaeology of Man, Nature, and Thing in the Aegean Bronze Age, edited by Nasser Ayash, Franziska Fritzsche and Diana Wolf, Propylaeum eDok 2019. <https://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/view/collections/c-14.html>

Poznan 2019

Papers included in: *Temat specjalny: Contributions to the Mediterranean Archaeology / Przyczynki do archeologii śródziemnomorskiej*, Fontes Archaeologici Posnanienses 56, Poznan 2020.

Groningen 2020

Breaking Boundaries - Connecting the Aegean Bronze Age. Proceedings of the 3rd Scapecon Conference, hosted online at the Groningen Institute for Archaeology on 22 and 29 September and 6 October 2020, edited by Iris Rom, Daniel Turner, Dimitris Filioglou, Francesca Slim and Youp van den Beld, *TMA Supplement* 2, 2021.

Rethymnon 2021

No (e)scape? (R)evolutions: in search of radical-scapes in the Aegean Bronze Age, Proceedings of the 4th international post-graduate and early career scholars' conference, 22-25/10/2021, Rethymno-Crete, Greece, edited by Eleni Chreiazomenou, Paraskevi Vlachou and Antonis Vratsalis-Pantelaios, in preparation.

4. Human Body Fragmentation in the Micrographic Images of Aegean Bronze Age Seals

Tatiana Stamatia Andreovits[1]

Abstract: This paper aims to explore the concept of human body fragmentation in Bronze Age miniature iconography. The analysis incorporates body and gender theory to examine miniature body fragments depicted in Bronze Age Aegean seal images. While seals and sealings are often preserved in fragmentary states, body fragmentation can also be discerned in purposeful depictions of specific body parts intertwined with other iconographic motifs. Body parts are portrayed in hieroglyphic seals, so-called 'portrait heads', and are also incorporated into hybrid bodies. In addition to depicting fragmented bodies, miniature iconography presents numerous seemingly whole bodies. However, the depiction of the human body was neither uniform throughout the Bronze Age nor a consolidated entity. Even when portrayed as complete, its representation remains fragmentary due to the presence of multiple identities, *e.g.* gender or social status. This analysis seeks to explore the role of multiple representations of the human body as well as the viewing process in the constitution of a seemingly whole but at the same time fragmented body.

Introducing fragmented material in Bronze Age Aegean

Archaeological research clearly revolves around the examination of fragmented aspects of material culture, encompassing various items such as fragments of pottery sherds, architectural elements, or even funerary remains that are deliberately or unintentionally fragmented. This condition of fragmentary pieces significantly influences archaeological interpretation and frequently confines it to the perpetual pursuit of intact artefacts. Scholars have engaged in a thorough debate to ascertain the numerous potential reasons for the existence of fragments in archaeological contexts (Chapman 2000: 23-27). This discussion has explored the practice of deliberate fragmentation (Chapman 2000: 37-48), the ritual killing of objects (Hamilakis 1998; Chapman 2015: 25-26), the practice of enchainment through the exchange or appropriation of fragmented objects (Chapman & Gaydarska 2007) and even the process of refitting fragments (Chapman 2015: 28-29).

Within Bronze Age Aegean archaeology, one of the most debated issues centres around fragmented anthropomorphic figurines, particularly specific body parts discovered in 'special deposits' of Early Bronze Age Keros, and the Minoan Peak Sanctuaries of Iuktas and Petsophas (*e.g.* Peatfield 1992; Renfrew 2015; Renfrew *et al.* 2015). Through contextual analysis of these deposits, it has been suggested that the figurines were intentionally broken in a separate location and subsequently transported as ritualised objects during their final journey (*e.g.* Peatfield 1992; more recent overviews in Simandiraki-Grimshaw & Stevens 2013; Hadji 2015; Murphy 2018; Knappett 2020: 176-178).

This paper aligns with broader studies that examine the fragmentation of the human body. More specifically, it will place special emphasis on the representation of miniature human bodies as depicted in Bronze Age Aegean seal images. The aim of this paper is to discuss the concept of miniature body fragmentation. The choice of the miniature body concept is based on two primary considerations. First, it aligns with the tiny scale of their visual medium, which consists of seal images. Second, miniature objects possess specific attributes that enable them to convey intensified meanings (Knappett 2012: 103) and foster intimate interactions through their tactile nature (Martin & Langin-Hooper 2018: 3).

The cases where human bodies are deliberately depicted in fragments in seal images will be presented and discussed first. There will follow a comparison of miniature iconography of the Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods with that of the Neopalatial period by analysing seal images featuring complete body representations. Mycenaean and LBA II-III bodily representations are excluded from the current paper, for the purposes of cohesion. An additional aspect that is thoroughly explored is the performance of fragmentary identities and the

1 Institute of Classical Archaeology, University of Heidelberg, PhD Candidate.
This study is supported by the Baden-Württemberg Landesgraduiertenförderung (LGF) Programme. I would like to thank Prof. Dr Diamantis Panagiotopoulos for his guidance and support throughout my doctoral studies. I am also very thankful to Dr Maria Anastasiadou and Prof. Dr Diamantis Panagiotopoulos for granting me access to the Corpus of Minoan and Mycenaean Seals (*CMS*) Archive in Heidelberg and for generously permitting me to reproduce photographic material from the *CMS* Archive.

role of the viewing process in shaping the perception of the body. In the broader framework of iconography, body and gender theory are incorporated, along with performativity, in order to better understand the perception of the body in Bronze Age societies.

Seals, sealings, and signet rings are tiny and movable artefacts that act as communicative media. They often feature one or more representational designs that may include entire, fragmented, or composite devices that are put together by entire motifs and/or body parts. Among these motifs, the human body is commonly represented, either in parts or as a whole. However, the representations are sometimes not entirely preserved, due to fragmentation of the visual medium itself (Younger 1981: 31; Krzyszkowska 2005: 2).

1. Seals in fragments

A considerable number of preserved seal images exhibit high levels of fragmentation. Broken or incomplete seals, as well as fragmented or poorly preserved sealings, can be found throughout the Middle and Late Bronze Age. Detailed information regarding the state of preservation of the published material can be found in the *Corpus of Minoan and Mycenaean Seals* (*CMS*) database and series. The fragmented state of preservation presents a contradiction: it complicates the study of the motifs, but also provides valuable information about the manufacturing process and various engraving techniques (Krzyszkowska 2005: 13). Unfinished, modified, or broken seals reveal the step-by-step manufacturing process and techniques employed (Younger 1981: 31). Broken or discarded seal stones may indicate mistakes made during the carving process or challenges faced by apprentices. Before proceeding to present body theory and the selected material, it is worth noting the Seal Cutter's Workshop in Malia as an example of broken and unfinished seal assemblages.

The Seal Cutter's Workshop in Malia provides significant insights into the seal manufacturing process. Situated in Malia's Quartier Mu, the workshop was destroyed during MM IIB and was not utilised in subsequent periods (Poursat 1996: 7). This structure has been identified as a seal workshop due to the discovery of blocks of steatite and other, mainly soft, stones, tools, and unfinished seals within and around its premises (Poursat 1996: 103-110). The excavation of the destroyed workshop brought to light 140 seals, the majority of which were fragmented and discarded after unintentional breakage during the manufacturing process (Anastasiadou 2011: 60). Most of these seals were three-sided steatite prisms, featuring diverse iconographic motifs, including human and animal figures, objects, and natural elements, sometimes arranged in complex compositions (Anastasiadou 2011: 60-61). The three-sided prisms exhibit remarkably similar engraving styles, indicating that they were unfinished and fragmented products originating from the same workshop, likely crafted by the same individual and possibly an assistant (Krzyszkowska 2005: 95). Many of the seals associated with the workshop are fragmented and display breaks that occurred during the string-hole drilling process, while others reveal design trials or drafts (**Fig. 4.1**) (Anastasiadou 2011: 47-48). These fragmented and unfinished three-sided prisms offer valuable insights into the craftsmanship and production techniques employed in the workshop. Evidence of trial and error suggests that the craftsperson experimented with various patterns and motifs before finalising the engraving on the seals.

Fig. 4.1. Fragmented seals with toolmarks from Seal Cutter's Workshop at Malia. *CMS* II,2 n° 179a; *CMS* II, 2 n° 119a; *CMS* II,2 n° 159b: three-sided prisms belonging to the Malia Steatite Group (© *CMS* Heidelberg)

One the one hand, as mentioned above, there is the aspect of a miniature iconography being unintentionally fragmented due to manufacturing defects or post-depositional breakage, with a significant number of cases. On the other hand, there is the fragmentary character of the miniature human body itself, which is deliberately represented fragmented or in body parts. The latter will be further discussed and examined through various examples.

2. From theory of embodiment to iconography

In recent decades, the human body has been considered a theoretical project and a significant number of discourses have been produced (*e.g.* Turner 1984; Lacqueur 1990; Martin 1992; Grosz 1994; Burkitt 1999; Shilling 2003). At a basic level, the body is perceived as a natural organism with specific functions dictated by various factors such as age, reproductive capacity, illness, and more. Historically, certain researchers perpetuated the Cartesian division between the body and the spirit, viewing the biological body as the naturalised underlay that constructs a person's social characteristics (Robb 2016: VII). This body-spirit dualism, considering the body as a neutral and passive surface for inscribing social meanings, has faced criticism from contemporary theoretical perspectives (Kotsakis 2016: 225), some of which will be briefly outlined below.

Structuralist anthropologists have emphasised the social dimension of the body, which is considered a system of meanings that differs depending on space and time (Hodder & Hutson 2004: 108-109; Robb 2016: VIII). Bourdieu's theory of habitus (Bourdieu 1977: 78-79, 85-88, 94-95) highlights the ways in which social structures and embodied experiences interact to shape people's preferences and actions. A person's bodily identity is constructed through repeated engagement in various social practices and, consequently, habitus plays a special role in shaping the body (Bourdieu 1977: 82-83; Robb 2016: IX).

Furthermore, phenomenological approaches perceive the body, fragmented or intact, as an active agent through which humans perceive the world, and collect experiences and memories that differ depending on space and time. Embodied involvement with the environment, with other people and with material culture, constitutes the way in which social identity is formed and expressed (Hodder & Hutson 2004: 117-118; Kotsakis 2016: 225). According to Merleau-Ponty, "the body is the vehicle of being in the world" (Merleau-Ponty 2005: 94) and embodied experience and bodily performances and gestures are essential for both perception of the world and social interactions (Merleau-Ponty 2005: 141, 185, 215, 376). The body entangles with the social and cultural environment through a sensory process and thus comprises a means for the (re)construction of identities (Hamilakis 2002: 126-127).

Judith Butler (1999) employs Turner's concept of 'social drama' (Turner 1974: 35-36) to describe the formation of embodied identity, which is shaped by its spatial and chronological context through the repetition of specific bodily practices (Athanasiou 2006: 97). Following the phenomenological tradition, the body assumes a central role in the process of engenderment as this is achieved through the active repetition and performance of the characteristics that form an engendered identity (Butler 1999: 179). Performativity is not a conscious act, but a repetitive practice of behaviours that are considered normal. At the same time, however, performance is never complete since bodies often do not conform to socially accepted identities (Butler 1999: 180).

This brief summary of the basic theoretical approaches to the body allows us to comprehend its role in the process of constructing and expressing social identity at both personal and collective levels. This paper's central methodological approach is to examine the human body as a means of understanding social identities through miniature representation. The body, in its dialectical relationship with the social and cultural environment (Mina 2012: 96), becomes instrumental in (re)constructing identities. Consequently, the body itself, its biography, and its material imprint are the principal axes of my approach.

3. Miniature bodies in Bronze Age Aegean images

The iconography of the human body emerges in Early Minoan (EM) III seals and continues until the end of the Bronze Age with an increase during the Late Bronze Age (LBA) (Krzyszkowska 2005: 67, 89-90, 137-144). My research has yielded a comprehensive dataset of Bronze Age Aegean seal imagery, encompassing approximately 1,200 seals, sealings, and signet rings that bear one or more human body representations. These human figures appear on seals of diverse shapes and materials, crafted using various techniques and tools. The representation of

the human body ranges from concise and summarily rendered to detailed and elaborate, capturing a wide array of gestures and stances. These figures engage in either simple and everyday activities or ceremonial acts, donning elaborate or simple hairstyles, clothing, and adornments that may reveal or conceal different body parts. In the following sections, our focus will be on discussing the depiction of body parts and body wholes within miniature iconography.

Seals are equipped with a feature that enables them to be worn on the human body. They may preserve a string-hole for suspension or in the instance of signet rings, a hoop for adorning a finger (Krzyszkowska 2005: 21). Human bodies and seals are mutually shaped through proximal or visual interaction (Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2020: 215-216). This embodied engagement and intimacy with miniature body representations not only influences human agency, but also contributes to the agency of the seals themselves. The representation of body parts and body wholes serves as traces of embodied entanglement with the world, shaping the way in which social identity, whether individual or collective, is formed and expressed.

3.1. Hieroglyphic body parts

To begin with, the oldest known evidence of probable writing on the island of Crete is the Archanes Formula (for recent overviews on the debate see: Decorte 2018: 342, 347; Ferrara *et al.* 2021: 43), which appeared on a few seals from the Early Minoan (EM) III to Middle Minoan (MM) II period (Decorte 2018: 363-364; Ferrara *et al.* 2021: 44). Several scholars consider the Archanes Formula as a variety or precursor of the Cretan Hieroglyphic Script (*e.g.* Grumach & Sakellarakis 1966; Younger 1999: 380; Karnava 2000: 197; 2016: 352), while others propose that it might be a predecessor of the Linear A script (Schoep 2006: 45-46; Anastasiadou 2016a: 181-182) or of both (Schoep 1999: 266).

The Archanes Formula refers to a standardised sequence of five signs, which are further delineated into two groups [CHIC signs n° 42, 19 (𐄋, 𐄂) and 19, 95, 52 (𐄂, 𐄁, 𐄀)] (Olivier & Godart 1996: 17; Ferrara *et al.* 2021: 44). In the recent publication of a seal found in Neopalatial Room 3 of the Cult Centre in the City of Knossos, the idealised form of CHIC sign n° 95 has been conclusively identified for the first time (Kanta *et al.* 2022: 61-62, 85). The sign clearly portrays the head of bearded human figure (Kanta *et al.* 2022: 74-76), thereby providing substantial evidence supporting the incorporation of human body parts in the Archanes Formula.

Hieroglyphic documents first appeared towards the end of the MM IIB period (Younger 1999: 381), primarily in the form of sealstones (usually three or four-sided prisms) with engraved inscriptions, as well as clay documents bearing incised or impressed inscriptions (such as labels, four-sided bars, and crescents), and incised clay pots (Olivier & Godart 1996: 27-31; Younger 1999: 384). The Hieroglyphic Documents from the Hieroglyphic Deposit at Knossos (Evans 1909: 19-21), the MM IIB Quartier Mu and the *Dépôt Hiéroglyphique* in the Palace at Malia (Poursat 1990), and the archive deposit in the Palace of Petras (Tsipopoulou & Hallager 2010: 70-86) provide evidence of the administrative function of the script in the island's North-Central and Eastern regions (Schoep 1999: 272-273).

The Cretan Hieroglyphic Script, along with Linear A and Linear B, represent complex and developed logo-syllabic writing systems that utilise both logograms and syllabograms (Karnava 2000: 27-28). The classification system of Cretan Hieroglyphic was initially introduced by Evans in Scripta Minoa (1909) and later refined with the publication of the Corpus of Cretan Hieroglyphic (CHIC) (Olivier & Godart 1996).

The Hieroglyphic Script repertoire includes elements from both the animate and inanimate worlds. This encompasses depictions of human bodies and body parts (CHIC signs n° 1-10), animals and animal heads (CHIC signs n° 11-22), flowers and tree branches (CHIC signs n° 23-32), as well as inanimate objects like buildings, tools, vessels, and boats (Olivier & Godart 1996: 17), all reduced to the same scale (Karnava 2015: 145). The representations of animate elements, including human body parts, tend to be fragmentary, whereas inanimate creations are usually depicted in their entirety (Karnava 2015: 142-143). The pictorial signs used in the Hieroglyphic Script employ familiar and identifiable elements from the natural and human-made world to convey meaning and to effectively communicate messages. These symbols were carefully selected to ensure that the intended audience could easily understand and interpret the messages being conveyed. Moreover, the use of recognisable elements reflects the deliberate manipulation of visual and symbolic media within Minoan society, serving to legitimise the power and authority of the ruling elite (Ferrara & Jasink 2017: 46).

Based on the arrangement of the signs in CHIC, the first ten signs in the table (𐄀, 𐄁, 𐄂, 𐄃, 𐄄, 𐄅, 𐄆, 𐄇, 𐄈, 𐄉) represent human figures, and different body parts (Olivier & Godart 1996: 17). These signs include two whole bodies, a human bust, a human bust with a tree branch, an eye, arms and hands, and a human leg. Examples of seals with Hieroglyphic Script including human bodies and body parts can be found in **Fig. 4.2**. CHIC sign n° 4 (𐄃) depicts a human figure wearing a long skirt, while CHIC sign n° 9 (𐄈) could be perceived either as a hand or a glove.

According to Karnava (2015: 147-148), fragmented body parts in the Hieroglyphic Script are parallel with the votive clay body parts discovered in Minoan peak sanctuaries and settlements of the same period (MM II-MM III). In both cases, the segmented body parts signify the whole human body (Karnava 2015: 146) and create a visual and cognitive space that is ideal for interpretation.

Fig. 4.2. Examples of seals with Hieroglyphic Script that include human bodies and body parts. *CMS* III n° 230, CHIC n° 1, a human body in a crouch position; *CMS* VI n° 103, CHIC n° 7, in the shape of a human arm; *CMS* VI n° 101, CHIC n° 8, in the shape of a human hand; *CMS* II,6 n° 180, CHIC n° 9, in the shape of a human hand or a glove; *CMS* III n° 227 and *CMS* III n° 235, CHIC n° 10, in the shape of a human leg (© *CMS* Heidelberg)

4. Portrait heads

Besides the evidence from the scripts, the representation of body parts is exceedingly rare in Aegean miniature glyptic. Apart from segmented body parts used as script signs, the only other body part occasionally depicted is the human head. Among the approximately 1,200 seal images featuring human body representations, the so-called 'Portrait Heads' appear in only 15 instances[2] (**Fig. 4.3**). Notably, mask-like frontal heads (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.4**, *CMS* III n° 237) resembling fantastic creatures, gorgoneia, or masks used in rituals or ceremonies, are excluded from this categorisation following Polinger-Foster (1997: 128) and Pini (1999: 662). Their apotropaic and grotesque character discourages discussion on the question of portraiture (Polinger-Foster 1997: 128; Pini 1999: 662).

2 This category includes the following seal images: *CMS* I n° 5; *CMS* II,3 n° 13; *CMS* II,3 n° 196; *CMS* II,8 n° 40-042; *CMS* VI n° 293; *CMS* VIII n° 110; *CMS* IX n° D006a-c; *CMS* X n° 278; *CMS* XI n° 18; *CMS* XIII n° D022 and the unpublished in the *CMS* catalogue seal from the Metropolitan Museum in New York with Inv. No 26.31.218 (Pini 1999: CXLIIa).

However, the authenticity of several 'Portrait Heads' remains a highly debated aspect of research. Some[3] are considered forgeries by Betts (1981: 291-292) but accepted as genuine by Pini (1999: 663), while others[4] are excluded as forgeries by Pini (1999: 663).

With the exception of the doubtful seals, most portrait heads are dated to the Neopalatial period (MM III– LM I) (Pini 1999: 664). These include, among others, the three portraits from the Hieroglyphic Deposit in Knossos (*CMS* II,8 n° 40-042), a serpentinite discoid from the Grand Staircase of the Little Palace (*CMS* II,3 n° 13), and the bearded head from Grave Circle B at Mycenae (*CMS* I n° 5) (**Fig. 4.3**). The provenance of the remaining portrait heads is unknown.

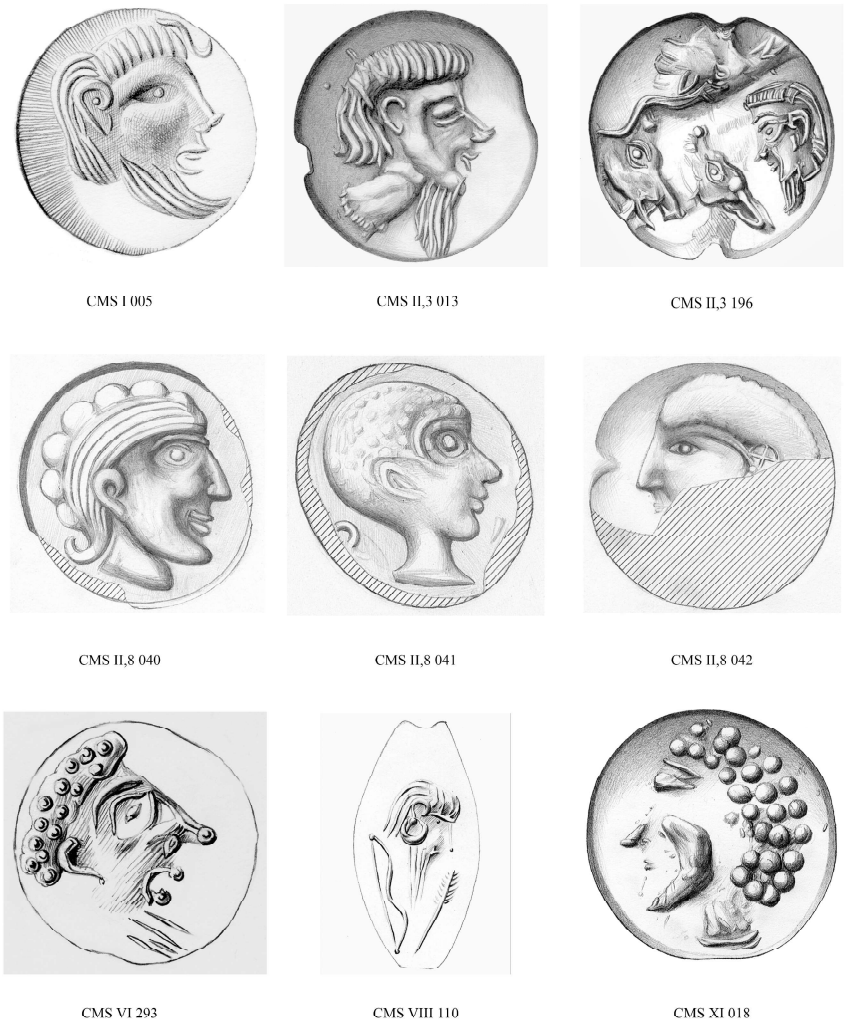

Fig. 4.3. Profile 'portrait' heads. *CMS* I n° 5: Grave Circle A, Mycenae; *CMS* II,3 n° 13: Little Palace, Knossos; *CMS* II,8 n° 40-042: Hieroglyphic Deposit, Knossos; *CMS* II,3 n° 196; *CMS* VI n° 293; *CMS* VIII n° 110; *CMS* XI n° 18: unknown provenance (© *CMS* Heidelberg)

Facial characteristics are rarely depicted in Minoan seal imagery. This small group of seals and sealings exclusively portrays human heads detached from their bodies, usually in profile. The sealing *CMS* II,8 n° 41 depicts a probably shaved figure of a young male, while *CMS* II,8 n° 40 shows a profile head with a preserved

3 *CMS* IX n° D006a-c.
4 *CMS* X n° 278, *CMS* XIII n° D022.

crest. Figures in *CMS* II,8 n° 42, *CMS* VI n° 293, *CMS* X n° 278, and *CMS* XI n° 18 have short hair with beaded or drilled hair curls. Profiles in seals *CMS* I n° 5, *CMS* II,3 n° 13, *CMS* II,3 n° 196, *CMS* IX n° D006b, *CMS* VI n° 293, *CMS* VIII n° 110, and one of the figures in *CMS* X n° 278 exhibit the so-called mullet hairstyle (Anastasiadou 2020: 6) and a long beard, indicating both the male gender and mature age of the figures. Younger (1995: 168) identifies the profile head with complex locks in *CMS* IX n° D006c as probably female. The remaining profiles are identified as male based on facial features and overall appearance. Some figures are depicted wearing jewellery such as earrings or hair jewels. Most of them have prominent noses and dotted eyes, with only a few cases showing more detailed depictions of eyes (*e.g. CMS* I n° 5).

In contrast to the majority of miniature human representations, the facial features in these 'Portrait Heads' are evident and are sometimes presented in detail (*e.g. CMS* II,3 n° 13, *CMS* II,8 n° 40, *CMS* II,8 n° 42). The human head covers the largest part of the seal-face, allowing for a detailed depiction of facial features. In a few cases, emphasis is placed on emotional expressiveness, as for example in *CMS* VI n° 293, which has been suggested to represent an act of shouting or singing (Polinger-Foster 1997: 130). These 'portraits' place special emphasis on facial characteristics. However, the question remains as to whether they depict certain individuals or deities in a realistic or idealised manner, or if they are simply products of artistic imagination (Polinger-Foster 1997: 132-134; Pini 1999: 666-667).

Moreover, the rarity of such subjects in Aegean glyptic suggests a potential connection to the status and rank of the owners (Krzyszkowska 2005: 137). These 'Portrait Heads' offer valuable insights into the artistic style and cultural context of the time through the recognition of similar patterns in visage representations in other Neopalatial iconographic media (Polinger-Foster 1997: 134-139; Pini 1999: 666). The ongoing debate over their realism or idealism complicates our understanding of their purpose and significance. Additionally, the association between these rare depictions and the social status of their owners raises intriguing questions about the role of art in ancient Aegean society.

5. Hybrid bodies

The representation of animate creatures, including indigenous and exotic animals, as well as fantastic or hybrid creatures, dominates the imagery found on Aegean Bronze Age seals (Crowley 2013: 349; Blakolmer 2018a: 100). Hybrid creatures are represented in around 400 seal images and have already been extensively discussed in scholarly literature, characterising them as hybrids, monsters, fantastic or composite creatures (*e.g.* Weingarten 1983; 2009; Krzyszkowska 2005; 2021; Zouzoula 2007; Shapland 2009; Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2010; Anastasiadou 2016b; 2018; Blakolmer 2016; 2018a). These fantastic creatures appear in seal imagery from the MM IIB period until the end of the Late Bronze Age (LBA), although not all creatures persist throughout this period.

According to Anastasiadou (2016b: 79), hybrids can be categorised as either standard hybrids composed in a fixed structure, reproduced repeatedly in Bronze Age iconography, or non-standard hybrids resulting from the occasional fusion of one or more different motifs, unknown to human cognition. The first category includes creatures such as the griffin, sphinx, dragon, genius, and gorgon or grotesque, which have foreign origins (Krzyszkowska 2005: 32, 90, 144; 2021: 233), as well as composite hybrids, resulting from the combination of human, animal, or fantastic creatures' body parts, which are considered to originate locally (Krzyszkowska, 2021: 241). Examples of non-standard hybrids were discovered in Neopalatial House A in Kato Zakros (Anastasiadou 2016b: 77). Here, the term 'Zakros type composites' introduced by Anastasiadou (2016b: 79) is adopted when referring to this hybrid category.

Bulls, lions, birds, goats, and stags are combined with human body elements such as heads, breasts, lower or upper bodies, limbs, wings, and tails. Minoan gorgons are of particular interest, distinguished by their human or hybrid frontal and swollen faces, large open eyes, large ears, and spiky hair, which have Near Eastern origins (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.4,** *CMS* III n° 237) (Anastasiadou 2011: 207-208; Krzyszkowska 2016: 118-119). The earliest gorgoneia appeared in MM II seals and became rare in the Late Bronze Age (Weingarten 1983: 92). Gorgon heads often stand alone, but are occasionally joined to a body (Anastasiadou 2018: 168-169), most likely serving an apotropaic purpose (Krzyszkowska 2016; Blakolmer 2018a: 143).

The Near Eastern-origin sphinx consists of a lion body with a human head, often accompanied by wings (**Fig. 4.4**, *CMS* VS3 n° 352) (Krzyszkowska 2005: 32). Its appearance in seals spans from MM II to the Neopalatial period,

during which it acquires Egyptian characteristics (Krzyszkowska, 2021: 237-238). Additionally, hybrid creatures combining the lower body of a human with the upper body and forelegs of quadruped animals such as lions, stags, agrimi, bulls, or genii are frequently depicted (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.4,** *CMS* II,3 n° 331; *CMS* II,8 n° 200; *CMS* III n° 363; *CMS* VII n° 123). In some instances, the upper parts of two different quadruped animals are attached to the human lower body. The so-called bull-man hybrids (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.4,** *CMS* III n° 363), predominantly represented during the LM II-LM III period, offer intriguing representations that may reflect an evolution of the bull-leaping episodes (Shapland 2009: 237; Wolf 2020: 62, 64). The chosen animals often correspond to those involved in hunting episodes from the same period. Shapland suggests that these hybrid creatures can be interpreted as 'compressed hunting scenes' (Shapland 2014: 556).

Fig. 4.4. Hybrid bodies on Aegean seals involving human parts. Dating: MM II-LM III. *CMS* III n° 237: 'Gorgoneion'; *CMS* VS3 n° 353: Sphinx; *CMS* II,3 n° 331: Goat-Human; *CMS* II,8 n° 200: Lion-Human; *CMS* III n° 363: Bull-Human; *CMS* VII n° 123: Bull-Goat-Human; *CMS* II,7 n° 132, *CMS* II,7 n° 140: Zakros type composites; *CMS* III n° 365: Bird-Lady (© *CMS* Heidelberg)

As far as the 'Zakros type composites' are concerned (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.4,** *CMS* II,7 n° 132; *CMS* II,7 n° 140), the hybrid bodies are formed through the fusion of various devices, which sometimes derive from living creatures and other times do not (Anastasiadou 2016b: 82). In cases where they are coherently composed of living parts such as heads, wings or legs and preserve a face, they give rise to the creation of new entities that can be characterised as creatures (Anastasiadou 2016b: 82). Each fragment contributes distinct qualities, blending seamlessly to produce novel and unexpected outcomes. This merging process allows for endless possibilities as different combinations yield diverse results.

Another hybrid motif found in Aegean seal imagery is that of the Bird Ladies (*e.g. CMS* II,7 n° 132; *CMS* III n° 365) and, less commonly, Bird Men (*e.g. CMS* II,7 n° 140) (**Fig. 4.4**). These hybrids exhibit a unique combination of human and avian features. They present the harmonious fusion of human heads, breasts, or skirts with bird heads or wings. Bird ladies usually wear long skirts and very rarely they have prominent breasts (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.4**, *CMS* II,7 n° 132), attributes which permit their gender categorisation (Weingarten 2009: 140-141). Apart from the Bird Ladies and the Sphinxes which are considered to be female, most of the other human-animal hybrids include variable combinations with male figures (*e.g.* bull-man, goat-man, lion-man, *etc*.) (Blakolmer 2018a: 127, 157, pl. 11). In some cases, male genitalia are observed in the lower torso of the human figure, while others display mixed gender characteristics (Weingarten 2009: 141-142). However, it is important to recognise that hybrid bodies encompass different and multiple identities which they tend to repel. In them, human gender identity is intertwined with animality and constructs a new fluid identity that challenges strict gender categorisations.

The hybridity of animal-human forms reveals the porous and unstable nature of the boundaries between humans, animals, and the natural world (Miracle & Borić 2008: 102). The complex somatic relationship between humans and animals within composite creatures is intricate and dynamic, simultaneously embodying and desomatising entanglements that give rise to new corporealities composed of fragmented body parts (Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2010: 100-101). For example, the hybrid creatures in *CMS* III n° 363 and *CMS* VS3 n° 113 are composed of the lower human body and the upper body of a bull and a goat respectively. These creatures serve as embodied symbols of commonly recognised natural entities, such as humans, bulls, and goats. However, their entanglement challenges those existing taxonomic systems, giving rise to novel beings *e.g.* the Bull-man that hover between humanity and animality, acquiring their own unique identities, characteristics, and abilities. These Bronze Age hybrid bodies act as mediators between reality and the supernatural realm, while their fragmentation and reformulation generate new corporealities that play a dynamic role in Aegean iconography (Krzyszkowska 2016: 120).

6. The whole body in pieces

Aesthetic theory frequently interprets fragmentation in art as the destruction or absence of a unified whole. Fragmented art implies the unfinished, and through a mourning process, the individual parts' endeavour to reconstruct a sense of unity (Ross 2010: 9; Granziol-Fornera 2017: 30-32). The boundaries between the fragment and the whole are sometimes fragile, and their segmentation is affected by several factors. It is worth noting that a fragment might not just represent a component of a former whole, but may also reflect a new entity that opposes completeness (Granziol-Fornera 2017: 31). This opposition to wholeness draws parallels with Butler's theory concerning the persistently incomplete and uncertain performance of subjective identity (Butler 1999).

The majority of miniature bodies in Bronze Age Aegean seal imagery are displayed in their entirety. The iconography of the body was not unified and consistent throughout the Bronze Age. On the contrary, it differs greatly in terms of representational mode, rendering style and the detailed depiction of the individual features. In the following paragraphs, some key elements regarding the representation of the miniature body are briefly presented. For the sake of concision, the focus is directed towards the Prepalatial and Protopalatial on the one hand, and Neopalatial body representations on the other, permitting observation of the disparities between these iconographic sequences.

During the Prepalatial period, seal production predominantly utilised bone, ivory, and soft stones (Krzyszkowska 2005: 59) (**Fig. 4.5**). However, only 27 seals with representations of the human body from this period have been documented for the purposes of my research. In contrast, the Protopalatial period presents a more significant abundance of human body representations, as these are attested on 308 seal faces and 23 seal impressions (author's data, based on the already published material). Soft stones such as steatite and chlorite were

predominantly used in seal manufacture (Krzyszkowska 2005: 81) (**Fig. 4.6**). Among these, a considerable majority can be attributed to the Malia Steatite Group, dated to the MM II period and manufactured in the Seal Cutters' Workshop in Malia (Krzyszkowska 2005: 92-93; Anastasiadou 2011: 63). 70 seal faces featuring representations of the human body, made of hard stones, are attributed to the Hieroglyphic Deposit Group (**Fig. 4.7**) (Yule 1980: 215-218; Anastasiadou 2016a: 165). Within this group, the predominant theme comprises Hieroglyphic signs depicting human bodies or body parts, with only a limited number of instances where human figures serve as pictorial motifs (Anastasiadou 2016a: 165-166). Sealings which are lumps or shaped objects of clay that carry one or more seal impressions (Krzyszkowska 2005: 3, 5) offer us valuable information regarding both the seals used in order to impress them and the sealing practices through the study of the positive relief images.

Both Prepalatial and Protopalatial seals are primarily carved using hand tools (Krzyszkowska 2005: 59, 81, 85). The way hand tools were employed in the periods' craft production resulted in a rather abstract and coarse representation of the figures. A comparable outcome is observed when cutting hard stones with rotary tools within the same chronological span. In these instances, the result is influenced by preference rather than the limitations of the tools (Yule 1980: 215). The human body is often portrayed as either an amorphous mass (*e.g. CMS* VI n° 62; *CMS* VS3 n° 22) or a unified form from which limbs emerge (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.6,** *CMS* II,2 n° 2; *CMS* II,2 n° 159). While some depictions give the impression of a fragmented amalgamation of individual body parts (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.7,** *CMS* III n° 65), others convey a sense of unified volume (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.5,** *CMS* II,6 n° 149; **Fig. 4.6,** *CMS* II,2 n° 164). Consequently, the distinguishing characteristics necessary for recognising social identities are often absent. The majority of the figures could not be categorised according to the binary gender system, since both biological and social gender attributes are typically not depicted. Prepalatial and Protopalatial miniature body representations prioritise conveying the broader essence of the human concept, rather than accentuating specific identities such as gender or age, or bodily aesthetics such as clothing or hairstyle.

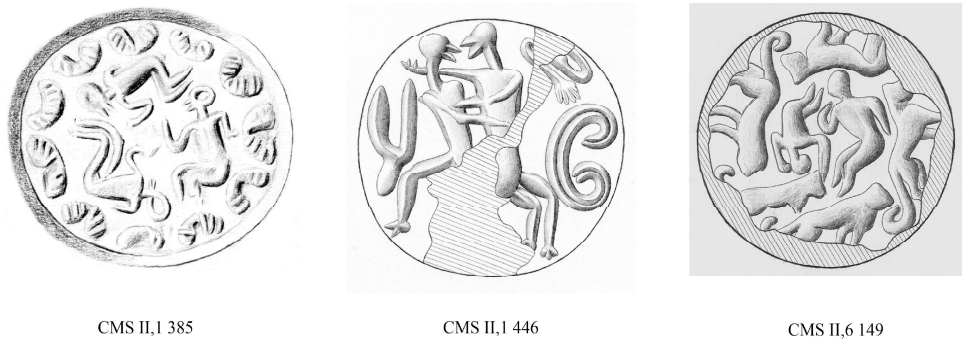

Fig. 4.5. Prepalatial seals made of hippopotamus bone with human body representations. *CMS* II,1 n° 385; *CMS* II,6 n° 149: human figures in rotational position, belonging to Parading Lions Group, Phourni; *CMS* II,1 n° 446: two hugging figures, Viannos (© *CMS* Heidelberg)

Only six instances exhibit human figures wearing long kilts or robes and with their hair tied in a bun (**Fig. 4.6,** *CMS* VI n° 34; *CMS* XIII n° 80; **Fig. 4.7,** *CMS* VI n° 92), attributes that have been utilised to determine their possibly female gender identity (Anastasiadou 2011: 169). A few of these female figures are portrayed engaging in what could be interpreted as dancing movements. On the contrary, the iconography of the period lacks any gender specific attributes indicating male figures.

With the exception of the possibly female figures, clothing, hairstyles, and other bodily adornments are usually absent from Prepalatial and Protopalatial seals (Anastasiadou 2011: 167). Hairstyle details are rarely depicted; in certain instances, figures exhibit short hair (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.6,** *CMS* X n° 315; **Fig. 4.7,** *CMS* II,2 n° 230) or short locks (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.6,** *CMS* III n° 166). The miniature iconography of this period largely lacks other indications of bodily adornment or modification.

The representation of the figures was notably straightforward, and the activities performed by the subjects were limited. Most figures were presented either in a standing position or seated, engaged in everyday practices like constructing and carrying vessels, loom weights, bows, and arrows (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.6,** *CMS* II,2 n° 159; *CMS* II,2 n° 164;

CMS X n° 315). Additionally, the human-animal relation and the bodily interaction between human figures often adhere to established iconographical conventions, illustrating human figures carrying or exposing their prey (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.6,** *CMS* II,2 n° 174; *CMS* VI n° 25), embracing one another (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.5,** *CMS* II,1 n° 446), or participating in processions or dancing scenes (**Fig. 4.6,** *CMS* II,2 n° 2; *CMS* VI n° 34). With the exception of procession scenes, Prepalatial and Protopalatial miniature iconography rarely features symbolic or ceremonial descriptive elements, particularly those involving ceremonial objects, symbols and architectural features.

In conclusion, the examination of Prepalatial and Protopalatial iconography reveals a prevalent inclination to portray the human body as a cohesive entity, where individual parts are seldom distinguished. This tendency towards a unified depiction of the body consequently omits distinctive features such as the depiction of breasts or genitals, clothing, adornment or hairstyle that could otherwise facilitate a detailed identification of social identities and practices. The formal and simplistic style of representation in these seals, along with the absence of gender-specific traits and additional bodily adornments, accentuates a focus on humanness in a broader sense. For instance, the gender, age or social status of the figure in *CMS* II,2 n° 164 (**Fig. 4.6**) is not recognisable, rather the human body symbolises the human entity.

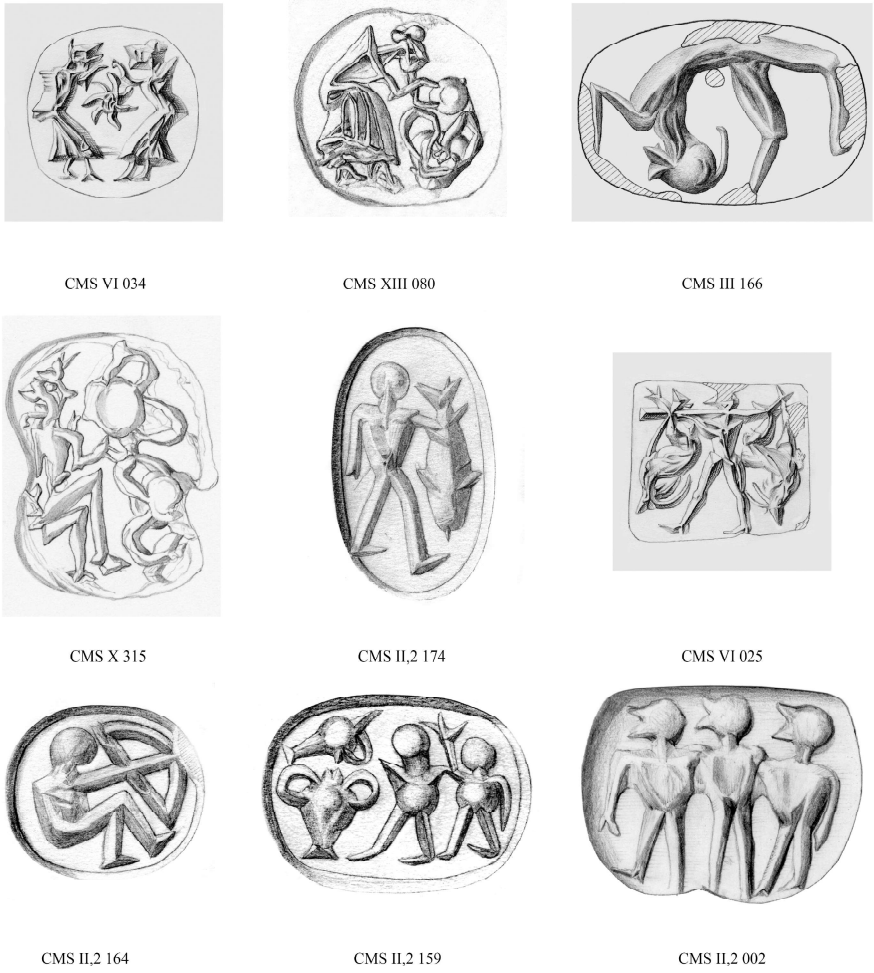

Fig. 4.6. Examples of Protopalatial soft stone seals with human body representations that belong to the Malia Steatite Group. *CMS* VI n° 34, *CMS* XIII n° 80: featuring female figures; *CMS* III n° 166, *CMS* X n° 315: rare depictions of hairstyle; *CMS* II,2 n° 174, *CMS* VI n° 25: figures carrying or exposing their prey; *CMS* II,2 n° 159; *CMS* II,2 n° 164: figures engaged in simple acts; *CMS* II,2 n° 2: procession scene (© *CMS* Heidelberg)

Fig. 4.7. Examples of Protopalatial hard stone seals with human body representations that belong to Hieroglyphic Deposit Group. *CMS* III n° 065, *CMS* II,2 n° 230: human figures with short hair in crab pose; *CMS* VI n° 92: female figure performing a gesture (© *CMS* Heidelberg)

By contrast, the Neopalatial period witnesses a notable shift in both the chosen materials and techniques and the mode of representation (**Figs 4.8-10**). A total of 220 seal impressions, 164 seals and 31 signet rings, featuring human body representation belong to this era (author's data, based on the already published material). While the use of soft stones endures throughout the Bronze Age, the Neopalatial period witnessed an increase in the utilisation of semi-precious hard stones such as amethyst, jasper, agate, and haematite, which are usually crafted with rotary tools (Krzyszkowska 2005: 122-124). Moreover, the period sees the wide use of metal signet rings (Pini 1998; Becker 2018: 299). In addition, the numerous seal impressions from various locations, such as Hagia Triada (Müller *et al.* 1999), Knossos (Gill *et al.* 2002) and Zakros (Müller *et al.* 1998), provide excellent examples of complex and multifigured compositions, offering insights into Neopalatial art.

Fig. 4.8. LM I miniature body representations from Knossos. Group 1: *CMS* II,3 n° 15, bronze signet ring; *CMS* II,8 n° 264, *CMS* II,8 n° 268, impressions of signet rings. Group 2: *CMS* II,3 n° 17, soft stone cushion seal; *CMS* II,3 n° 72, *CMS* II,3 n° 171, soft stone lentoid seals (© *CMS* Heidelberg)

The engraving of hard stones and signet rings contributes to a more delicate and detailed depiction of human figures. The individual body features become more visible, and distinct differences to some extent influence the gender categorisation of the figures (**Figs 4.9-10**). The representation of the bodies resembles those depicted in wall paintings (*e.g.* refer to Blakolmer 2010; 2012 for insights into the relationship between seal imagery and wall paintings, as well as Alberti 2002; 2005; Chapin 2009; 2012 for analyses of the human body in wall paintings). These representations present detailed portrayals of the human body, sometimes emphasising female breasts, male genitals, and muscular athletic bodies. Different body parts are usually harmoniously integrated into the core, sometimes creating a meticulous and detailed impression of the body. Male bodies commonly exhibit muscular torsos, long limbs, and narrow waists, while female bodies often display accentuated breasts, very narrow waists, and curvy lower bodies (Anastasiadou 2020: 6-7).

Fig. 4.9. HUMAN FIGURES IN NEOPALATIAL MINIATURE ICONOGRAPHY WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE APPROPRIATE CLOTHING. *CMS* II,8 N° 272: SIGNET RING IMPRESSION, KNOSSOS; *CMS* VI N° 183: CHALCEDONY SEAL IN THE SHAPE OF CUSHION, KNOSSOS; *CMS* II, 3 N° 51: GOLD SIGNET RING, KNOSSOS; *CMS* VI N° 278: GOLD SIGNET RING, UNKNOWN PROVENANCE; *CMS* II,6 N° 4, N° 11, N° 43: SIGNET RING IMPRESSIONS, HAGIA TRIADA; *CMS* II,7 N° 33: CUSHION SEAL IMPRESSION, KATO ZAKROS; *CMS* VS2 106: GOLD SIGNET RING, ELATIA (© *CMS* HEIDELBERG)

It is crucial to recognise that certain biological and social traits used to assign female gender to a human body, such as narrow waists, long flounced skirts, and performative gestures, already existed during the Protopalatial period. These characteristics persistently appear in later periods of Minoan iconography, underscoring their

enduring significance and influence. Similar traits were notably absent in representations of male figures during the Protopalatial period and had to be developed during the subsequent Neopalatial period.

The representation of the human body is not uniform throughout the Neopalatial period; rather, it exhibits variations depending on chronological, technological, and stylistic factors. An example of this are the seals and sealing depicted in **Fig. 4.8,** although they were all found in the region of Knossos and are stylistically dated to LM I (Gill *et al.* 2002: 145; Krzyszkowska 2005: 129-130; Pini 2010: 332-335). The human bodies in the two groups are depicted very differently. The first group (**Fig. 4.8**) presents elaborate depictions with detailed representations of both the human bodies and the surrounding devices. In contrast, the human figures in the second group (**Fig. 4.8**) are more abstract, with simplified body features. The first group includes relief images produced by metal signet rings, while the second includes soft stones. The different materials and consequently the different processes employed to produce their designs affect to a large extent the degree of detailed rendering of the human body. However, despite the variations in body representation, both groups of figures wear long, flounced skirts, typical clothing for female figures (*e.g.* Stefani 2013: 85-100), and perform gestures embedded in the period's iconographic repertoire (*e.g.* Morris 2001: 246-250; Murphy 2015: 314-316; Günkel-Maschek 2020: 155-158).

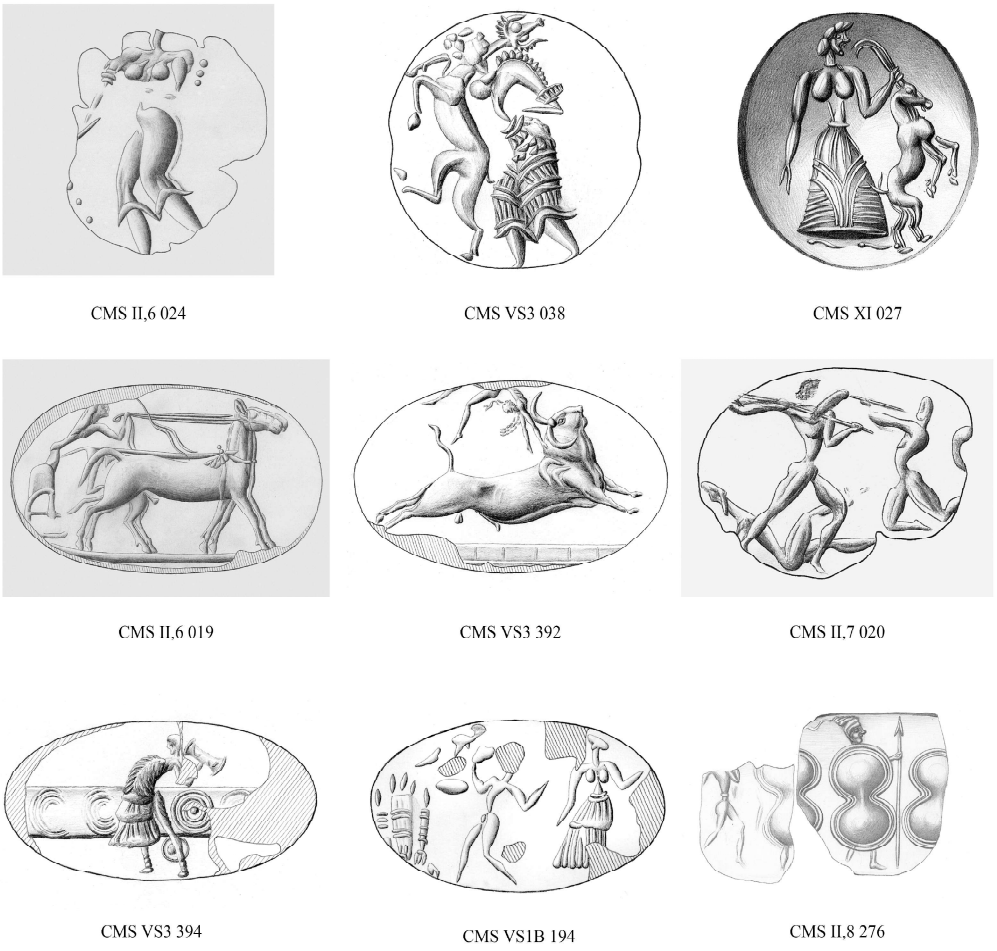

Fig. 4.10. Neopalatial miniature iconography representing human figures performing different practices. *CMS* II,6 n° 19, n° 24: signet ring impressions, Hagia Triada; *CMS* VS3 n° 38: serpentine lentoid seal, Malia; *CMS* XI n° 27: carnelian lentoid seal, unknown provenance; *CMS* VS3 n° 392, n° 394: signet ring impressions, Akrotiri; *CMS* II,7 n° 20: signet ring impression, Kato Zakros; *CMS* VS1B n° 194: signet ring, unknown provenance; *CMS* II,8 n° 276: signet ring impression, Knossos (© *CMS* Heidelberg)

Furthermore, the figures' clothing, and occasionally hairstyles and adornment are elaborate and closely linked to their gender identity and social status. Different garments suit male and female figures, with male attire often concealing the genitalia (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II,8 n° 272; *CMS* VI n° 183) and female attire sometimes revealing the breasts (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II, 3 n° 51; *CMS* VI n° 278; *CMS* II,6 n° 4) (Lee 2000:118-119). Choice of attire is also influenced by activities or events the figures are engaged in (Crowley 2012: 6-7). For example, belts and loincloths are suitable for hunting episodes (**Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II,7 n° 33) and bull-leaping scenes (**Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II, 6 n° 43), whereas elaborate flounced skirts or trousers, cloaks or hide-skirts are more appropriate clothing for ceremonial performances (**Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* VI n° 278, *CMS* VS2 n° 106, *CMS* II,6 n° 11**)**. Hairstyles and jewellery (**Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* I,6 n° 4, *CMS* VI n° 278, *CMS* VS2 n° 106) further reflect social status rather than strict gender roles. The intricate and prestigious clothing observed on seals, sealings, and signet rings (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II,6 n° 11; **Fig. 4.10,** *CMS* II,6 n° 24) suggest the importance of clothing during the Neopalatial period and indicate a complex and time-consuming textile production process (Crowley 2012: 7; Burke & Chapin 2016: 36-38). In conclusion, clothing, hairstyles and adornments are not only connected to an individual's gender identity but also to their social position and prestige (Lee 2000: 118; 121; Chapin 2012: 303; Franković 2022: 145).

In addition, a shift in selected themes can be observed. Ritual and symbolic content involving both male and female figures has considerably increased (Kryszkowska 2005: 139). The examined Neopalatial miniature iconography primarily features representations of animals and animate beings, appearing in almost half of the assemblage. Human figures are often depicted alongside animals, engaging in various activities. While hunting episodes are scarce (*e.g.* Krzyszkowska 2014: 346), scenes that include both male and female figures capturing or carrying lions, bulls, goats, rams, fish, and octopuses are more prevalent (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II,7 n° 33; **Fig. 4.10,** *CMS* VS3 n° 38; *CMS* XI n° 27). Various seals also present human-animal interactions, with some scholars interpreting them as representations of the Master or Mistress of Animals motif (*e.g.* Crowley 2010). Additionally, chariot riding (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.10,** *CMS* II,6 n° 19), bull-leaping (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.10,** *CMS* VS3 n° 392) and stick fighting (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.10,** *CMS* II,7 n° 20) emerge as common sporting events depicted in the seal images (*e.g.* Younger 1976; Shapland 2013; Koehl 2020). Ritualistic and symbolic practices involving the human body's entanglement with nature and ceremonial objects are dominant themes, with procession scenes (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II,6 n° 11; **Fig. 4.10,** *CMS* VS3 n° 394), ceremonial architecture (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.8,** *CMS* II,3 n° 15; **Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II,8 n° 272; **Fig. 4.10**; *CMS* VS1B n° 194), and potential performances portrayed (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* VI 278), (*e.g.* German 2000; Blakolmer 2018b). Multifigured scenes include both male and female figures actively involved in ceremonial practices, performing specific gestures, offering or accepting objects (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.8,** *CMS* II,3 n° 17; *CMS* II,8 n° 268). A few sailing scenes and military events (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.10,** *CMS* II,8 n° 276) are also present in Neopalatial iconography. Overall, Neopalatial seal imagery reflects a rich array of symbolic and ceremonial practices in which humans are actively involved.

7. "The whole is false[5]"

While the human body is typically depicted as a whole in Bronze Age Aegean seal imagery, its representation is characterised by a lack of uniformity. Three primary factors contribute to this disruption of uniformity and completeness: firstly, the preference for rendering specific human body characteristics varies between the different chronological periods; secondly, the human body has the capacity to act as a barrier to multiple and often contradictory identities; and thirdly, the process of viewing and perceiving the iconography of the human body contributes to visually segmenting its distinct body parts. The ensuing paragraphs will provide a brief discussion of these three factors.

During the Prepalatial and Protopalatial periods, human bodies were depicted summarily with minimal emphasis on bodily adornment, engaging in simple gestures, performing mainly everyday practices or participating in processions (**Figs 4.5-7**). The iconographic repertoire of the Neopalatial period featured human figures primarily involved in ceremonial and special practices. Detailed representations highlighted gender attributes, showcasing elaborate and prestigious clothing, intricate hairstyles, and jewellery (**Figs 4.8-10**). Consequently, the body in miniature iconography is not depicted as a fixed and unchangeable category during the Bronze Age; instead, it

5 Adorno 2005: 50.

offers numerous possibilities and suggestions for how a body might be depicted. The changes observed during the transition from the Protopalatial to the Neopalatial period, however, should not be perceived as a rupture. On the contrary, iconographic patterns such as the representation of female figures with narrow waists and long skirts (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.7**, *CMS* VI n° 92; **Fig. 4.8,** *CMS* II,3 n° 15), the participation in ceremonial processions (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.6**, *CMS*II,2 n° 2; **Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II,6 n° 11), or the performance of specific gestures (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.6**, *CMS* VI n° 34; **Fig. 4.8,** *CMS* II,3 n° 17), can be found on seal images from both periods. Both Protopalatial and Neopalatial seal imagery adhere to the iconographical conventions seen in other visual media such as frescoes, stone vessels or figurines (for comparative analysis, see Alberti 2002: 98-100; Hitchcock & Nikolaidou 2013: 510-516, and, for the human form in other visual media, consult Hitchcock 1997; Chapin 2009; 2012; Larsen 2011; Murphy 2016; Newmann 2017; Günkel-Maschek 2016; 2020), embedded within the official iconographical programme of society in each period.

In addition, even if the body is presented as a complete entity, it actually consists of multiple compositions of components. Through embodied involvement with the world, it becomes an active agent that carries multiple, sometimes fragmented, or contradictory identities (Hodder & Hutson 2004: 121). For example, the multifigure image *CMS* II,8 n° 268 (**Fig. 4.8**), depicts a ceremonial offering scene with three female participants. The gender of all the figures is probably female. However, the size of the two standing figures and their immature breasts indicate that they may be young females. On the contrary, the seated figure's larger size and her mature breasts suggest an older age or higher social status within the ceremonial offering scene. This difference in age and status could indicate a hierarchical structure as well as different age stages among the female participants. The variation in status is further supported by the gestures and acts of the participants. The young females, possibly members of the same community, carry and offer vessels to the seated figure, suggesting that the latter holds a position of authority or importance within the group. Her elevated status is also emphasised by the horns of consecration and the ritual building behind her.

This example makes it apparent that, despite all figures sharing the same identity of female gender, each one simultaneously carries other contradicting identities such as different age and status. Consequently, they comprise multiple sentiments and embodied experiences that shape their individual identity. Meskell (1998: 157) points out that archaeological research often disregarded the complex relationship between the individual and society, assuming that personal identity is solely a version of the social structure. By contrast, multiple and multifaceted meanings are ascribed to the body through the interweaving of the biological and the social, of individual and collective identity (Meskell 1998: 158). The figures in *CMS* II,8 n° 268 (**Fig. 4.8**) may possess a specific gender, age, social status, origin, *etc*., and these identities can at times coincide and at other times collide with one another. This understanding of the body as a site of constant negotiation and transformation highlights the inherent instability and uncertainty of subjective identity.

Furthermore, the perception of human bodies and the question of fragmentation or wholeness are significantly influenced by the viewing process. Miniature representation of human bodies therefore becomes meaningful through the dialectical relation between the image, the viewer, and the surrounding environment (Panagiotopoulos 2012: 63). The viewer actively participates in the perception and interpretation of human body representations and is strongly influenced by the social, psychological, ideological, and external factors (*e.g.* visibility, lighting conditions) to which they are exposed (Panagiotopoulos, 2012: 63). However, the tiny size of the seals has a substantial impact on the viewing process as the representations are typically not easily discernible and therefore this difficulty significantly limits access to the viewing process.

As a result, the act of viewing mediates the wholeness of the body, since the viewer's gaze and focus are typically fragmented. For instance, viewers, influenced by external and personal factors, may disrupt the seemingly unified female body in the Neopalatial signet ring impression (**Fig. 4.8,** *CMS* II,8 n° 264), at times objectifying, fetishising, or even rejecting it (Mulvey 1989: 19-20), while gravitating towards specific body parts. The viewer through a process of visual segmentation of the human body might focus on the mature breast, the narrow waist or the long legs of the figure. They might also notice the gesture or gender; or attempt to recognise the social status or the practice the female figure is engaged in. The body under the human gaze appears to be constantly changing, sometimes fragmented, and sometimes whole. In an experimental study concerning LBA signet rings with human body representations, Simandiraki-Grimshaw (2020: 210-212) observed how the position of the ring, different lighting sources (natural or artificial), and the position and angle of the lighting affected the viewing of golden

signet rings. The results clearly demonstrate that the human body is not always observed in the same way, and depending on the lighting technique different body parts are highlighted or concealed.

Additionally, the complexity of the representation of the human body also influences the viewing process. A detailed rendering of individual body features provides more stimuli to the eye, inviting the viewer to focus on different body parts in order to recreate the whole body (Ross 2010: 3). A large part of the miniature representation of the human body emphasises the detailed depiction of gender differences. For instance, in some cases (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.9,** *CMS* II,8 n° 272; **Fig. 4.10,** *CMS* VS1B n° 194; *CMS* VS3 n° 38), female breasts or male genitals are accentuated (Anastasiadou 2020: 6-7). This emphasis on specific and fragmentary body features dominates the perception of the image and contributes to the normalisation and legitimisation of gender differences (*e.g.* Alberti 2002: 102; Newmann 2017: 216). However, it is worth noting that the viewing process and the perception of an image are at the same time mediated by the established connotations of gender differences in each space and time. The body itself is strongly engendered, and its viewing plays a role in attributing gender to one of the body's social expressions such as different gestures and practices or selected clothing and adornment. For example, the emphasis on female breasts in **Fig. 4.8-10** results in the engenderment of both the clothing and hairstyle of this figure and the performed action and gesture. The bare-breast bodice thus simultaneously reflects the female identity.

In addition, as highlighted by Tim Ingold (2002: 352-353) in his attempt to analyse the concept of skill, the performance of an act cannot be understood by isolating its individual elements, but rather as an integrated system, a whole composed of different factors that interact with each other. For example, the outcome of a figure attacking another with a sword or a stick (*e.g.* **Fig. 4.10,** *CMS* II,7 n° 20) is not solely determined by the individual's strength, the size and weight of the stick, or the strength of the attack. Instead, it arises from the interplay of all these elements, producing a specific motion and reaction. Similarly, it becomes evident that the human body cannot be isolated from its movements, the clothing it is adorned with or the objects it wields, and it remains interconnected with the environment in which it interacts.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to explore the fragmentation of the human body in Aegean seal imagery, with the dual purpose of investigating the significance of purposefully depicting fragmented human body parts and emphasising the disunity of the entire represented bodies. The discussion of examples depicting detached body parts made it apparent that intentionally fragmented body parts are not the most frequent depiction in Bronze Age Aegean seals, sealings, and signet rings. However, the depiction of specific body parts in Hieroglyphic Seals and the so-called 'Portrait Heads', as well as the visual segmentation of human and animal body parts, are agents of multiple and complex meanings. In all cases, human body parts symbolise the whole body and act as familiar and recognisable cues for the viewer. The use of human body parts as signs in Hieroglyphic Script signifies familiar aspects of the world resulting in the effective transition of meanings and messages (see also: Karnava 2015: 146-148; Ferrara & Jasink 2017: 46). The emphasis on facial features and expressiveness in 'Portrait Heads' could possibly symbolise either a personal or an idealised identity. Meanwhile, the fusion of human and animal body parts desomatises their previously recognisable identities and creates new corporealities (see also: Simandiraki-Grimshaw 2010: 100-101; Krzyszkowska 2016: 120).

Aside from the aforementioned examples of fragmented bodies, the majority of miniature iconography depicts whole bodies. Throughout the paper, the fundamental characteristics of these representations have been briefly outlined, and the divergences between Prepalatial, Protopalatial and Neopalatial seal imagery have been discussed. Observed differences in the depiction of the body, level of detailed rendering of the body features, recognition of gender and social identities, use of adornment, and performed practices have all been briefly presented.

From the analysis, it was evident that the representation of the human body in miniature iconography displayed intentional fragmentation or completeness, but even when depicted as a whole, the human body was anything but uniform. On the contrary, the examples of body representations in Prepalatial, Protopalatial and Neopalatial seal images demonstrated a great variety of possible ways that the human body can be represented. In addition, the representation of a complete body comprises numerous features and embodies multiple identities such as gender, age, or social status, while integrating and emphasising different body parts. These repeatedly newly

occurring identities sometimes contradict one another and create hierarchies both within the subjects themselves and within their communities. Moreover, the visualisation of individual body parts in combination with the degree of detailed rendering of the body contribute to the visual segmentation of the human body, which in turn influences its perception by the viewer. As a result, specific social identities, such as gender, may become normalised through the viewing process itself.

In conclusion, this unity or disunity of bodily perception allows for the emergence of a rupture in embodied identity, a corporeal fragmentation (Grosz 1994: 141). "The boundaries of the whole body are ever shifting and elusive, reaching out to incorporate new fragments of the world, making 'wholeness' impossible" (Ross 2010: 5). The represented body is at the same time something material and something imaginary or cognitive. The concept of the human body in a cognitive sense, which changes depending on each space and time, might differ from the material remains of the body, whether it be the physical body in burial contexts or the represented body in iconographical remains. The whole does not constitute a naked physical body, but rather encompasses the totality of performances, movements, and objects that constitute what we perceive as the human person or living organism.

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