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## THE MINOAN 'FRAME' ON AN EGYPTIAN RELIEF

Egyptian artists of the Eighteenth Dynasty responsible for reliefs and frescoes depicting foreigners or the produce of foreign lands were fascinated by the strange physical characteristics and costume of the people and the outlandish forms and decoration of the wares that distinguished them from native Egyptians and their artefacts. While some artists, perhaps lacking opportunity for personal observation, eked out their ignorance with second-hand details copied from earlier pictures or with Egyptian motifs, others evidently based their designs on a close study of the real thing. In the Temple of Amun at Karnak, the designer of the relief on the corridor wall north of the Granite Sanctuary noted with care each peculiarity of the metal vases he was required to catalogue as Syrian tribute offered by Tuthmosis III to Amun-Re.

One of the silver vessels registered<sup>1</sup> is ostensibly an amphora with pointed base, two handles curving from rim to shoulder and plastic ornamentation on one side, directly below the handle (Plate Ia, Fig. 1a)<sup>2</sup>. Despite the artist's care in his observation of detail, the asymmetrical disposition of the decoration makes it improbable

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<sup>1</sup> I. Rosellini, *I Monumenti dell'Egitto* II, Pisa 1834, pl. LVII. 6 (omits the bull's head); J. F. Champollion, *Monuments de l'Egypte et de la Nubie*, Paris 1835—45, IV, 316 (omits the bull's head); Prisse d'Avennes, *Histoire de l'art*, Atlas II, Paris 1878, pl. 74 no. 14; K. Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dyn.* IV, Leipzig 1907, Band III, 637 (transforms the bull's head into that of a goat and transfers it to the opposite side of the vase); G. Jéquier, *L'architecture et la décoration dans l'ancienne Egypte* I, Paris 1920, pl. 47; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptische Kulturgeschichte* II, Leipzig 1935, pl. 33 no. 132; P. Montet, *Les reliques de l'art Syrien dans l'Egypte du Nouvel Empire*, Paris 1937, p. 99 fig. 138; J. Vercoûtter, *L'Egypte et le Monde Egéen Préhellénique*, Cairo 1956, pl. XLIII no. 314; P. Barguet, *Le Temple d'Amon-Ré à Karnak*, Cairo 1962, pl. XXI A.

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to the Oriental Institute, Luxor, U.A.R., for supplying the photographs (Plate Ia, b) and for permission to publish them. Fig. 1a i is a composite diagram based on these photographs, on earlier published illustrations (Fig. 1a ii—v, cf. *supra*, n. 1), and on the observations of Professor C. F. Nims, who kindly examined the original and sent me a sketch of the central object over the bull's head.

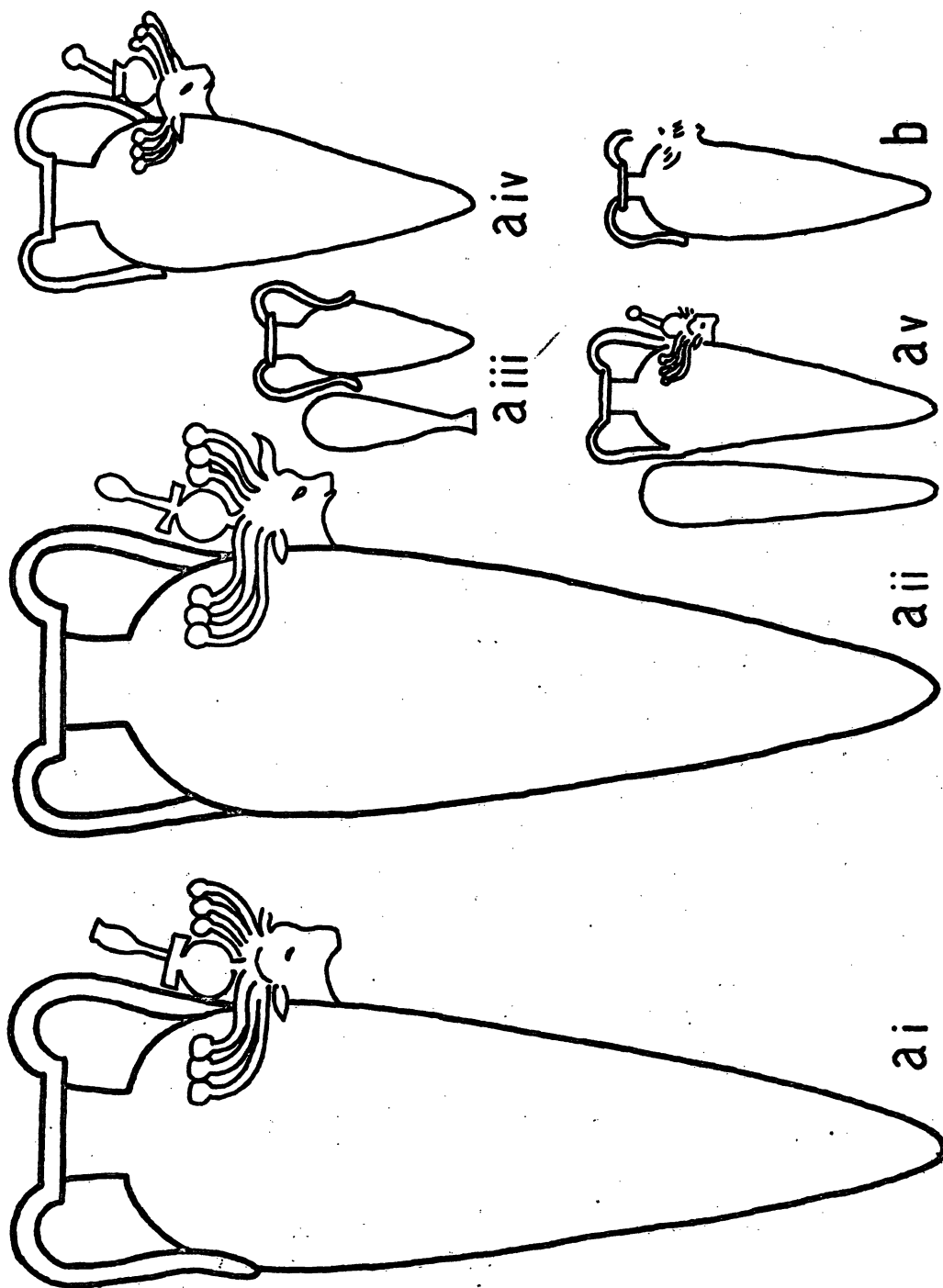


Fig. 1. Vases in the Temple of Amun at Karnak: (a i Author's version; ii after Prise II, Pl. 74 No. 14; iii after Champollion IV, p. 316; iv after Wreszinski II, Pl. 33 No 132; v, b after Vercoutter, Pl. XLIII Nos. 314, 315)

that the picture was an exact representation of the original vase. There are two possible explanations of this, either of which would produce a vase of acceptable form.

The prototype may have been a two-handled amphora as depicted, but having the incongruous ornament placed symmetrically on the shoulder between the handles<sup>3</sup>. The artist confronted with such a vase may have shied from attempting to draw the bull's head en face, preferring a traditional profile. Had he chosen to alter his view-point for this element alone, he could have inserted it in its correct position between the handles. Instead, he combined two views of the whole vase, from the front to show both handles and from the side to give a profile to the ornament projecting from its shoulder. The peculiar appearance of the vase in the relief would thus have been the result of artistic convention.

Alternatively, the original vase may have been a rhyton with a bull's head on the shoulder opposite its single handle. The relative positions of the salient features would have been correctly portrayed, with an extra handle added to the design at some stage between the initial sketching of the prototype and the carving of the relief. Detailed observation on the part of the artist is implied by the accuracy with which the elaborated bull's head is depicted, but it would be wrong to assume that the whole vessel was necessarily studied with equal scrutiny. The designer of the relief and the sculptors were relying on sketches. These would have shown the ornament in minute detail, because it was so unusual, the rest of the vase being perhaps only lightly indicated. As a result it may have been thought incomplete and 'corrected' from a strange single-handled rhyton to a two-handled amphora with which the Egyptians were more familiar.

No silver vase has survived approximating to either of the suggested forms. However, one illustrated in the tomb of Useramon<sup>4</sup> resembles the single-handled rhyton of the second hypothesis in every detail apart from the accessories over the bull's head; and there are clay parallels, evidently copies of metal prototypes: two single-handled rhytons from Minet-el-Beida<sup>5</sup> decorated with plastic bull's heads, and two from Crete with the heads of goats in-

<sup>3</sup> Wreszinski loc. cit. (supra, n. 1), suggests this in his commentary on pl. 33 no 130.

<sup>4</sup> Vercontter loc. cit. (supra, n. 1), pl. XLIII no. 311; *Bull.Metr.Mus.Art* 21, 1926, II 49 fig. 6 B

<sup>5</sup> C. F. A. Schaeffer, *Les Fouilles de Minet-el-Beida*, Syria 13, 1932, pl. IV 1, 3

stead<sup>6</sup>. It is unwise practice to base any theory on the assumption of ancient error, but the balance of probability seems to favour the view that the tribute vase in the temple treasury was a single-handled rhyton.

It may be significant that the Cretan vases just mentioned were found in the east of the island, at Palaikastro and Zakro, ports with well-established trade relations with Syria. Although the silver rhyton of the temple treasury was listed as tribute presumably from Syria, that is no proof that the article itself was of Syrian manufacture. It could well have been of Minoan origin.

Examination of the accessories above the head confirms a Minoan source. Omitting for the present the central element, the remaining features seem to represent an article consisting of three complex curves linked at the centre and terminating at either end in a knob. The object is unique in Egypt and unparalleled in the Near East. Only in Minoan Crete and the Mycenaean mainland has anything similar been found. Sometimes the curved 'frame' is three-fold as on the Egyptian relief, sometimes two-fold. A few of them are even associated with animal heads, showing the similarity of form to be no coincidence but due to identity.

Two fragments of fresco with both bull's head and accessory 'frame' come from the excavation of the Palace at Knossos (Fig. 2a, b)<sup>7</sup>. They depict in miniature style patterns on garments worn by large scale figures. The restoration in Figure 2c shows them with bulbous ends, as in all comparable examples in Minoan art<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> A. J. Evans, PM II 537, Fig. 341 (Palaikastro LM IA); HS/BSA Ann. Rep. 1962-3, 32, Fig. 35 (Zakro LM IB)

<sup>7</sup> Evans, PM II 742, Fig. 475 (Fragment a), III 41, Fig. 25d (Fragment b). Fig. 2a, b are based on these drawings, checked against photographs kindly lent by M. Cameron.

<sup>8</sup> It might be argued that the addition of knobs to the six ends of the curving elements in the suggested restoration of Fragment a (Fig. 2c) is unwarranted, especially as there does not appear to be enough space on Fragment b for a similar addition between the ends of the curves and the framing band of colour above. It should however be noted that the surface of Fragment b is damaged, some colours having become worn or flaked, as is evident in the adjacent sphinx who must once have had hair on the back of her head. The white paint of the curved elements fades towards their extremities, and any other colour applied when the plaster and paint had dried could well have flaked away and left no trace of its previous presence. Alternatively, the motif might have overlapped the frame. Cameron, who has made a close study of the frescoes at Knossos (cf. M. Cameron and M. S. F. Hood, *Sir Arthur Evans' Knossos Fresco Atlas*, London 1967) does not find it inconsistent with Minoan art for the knobs to overlay the first of the

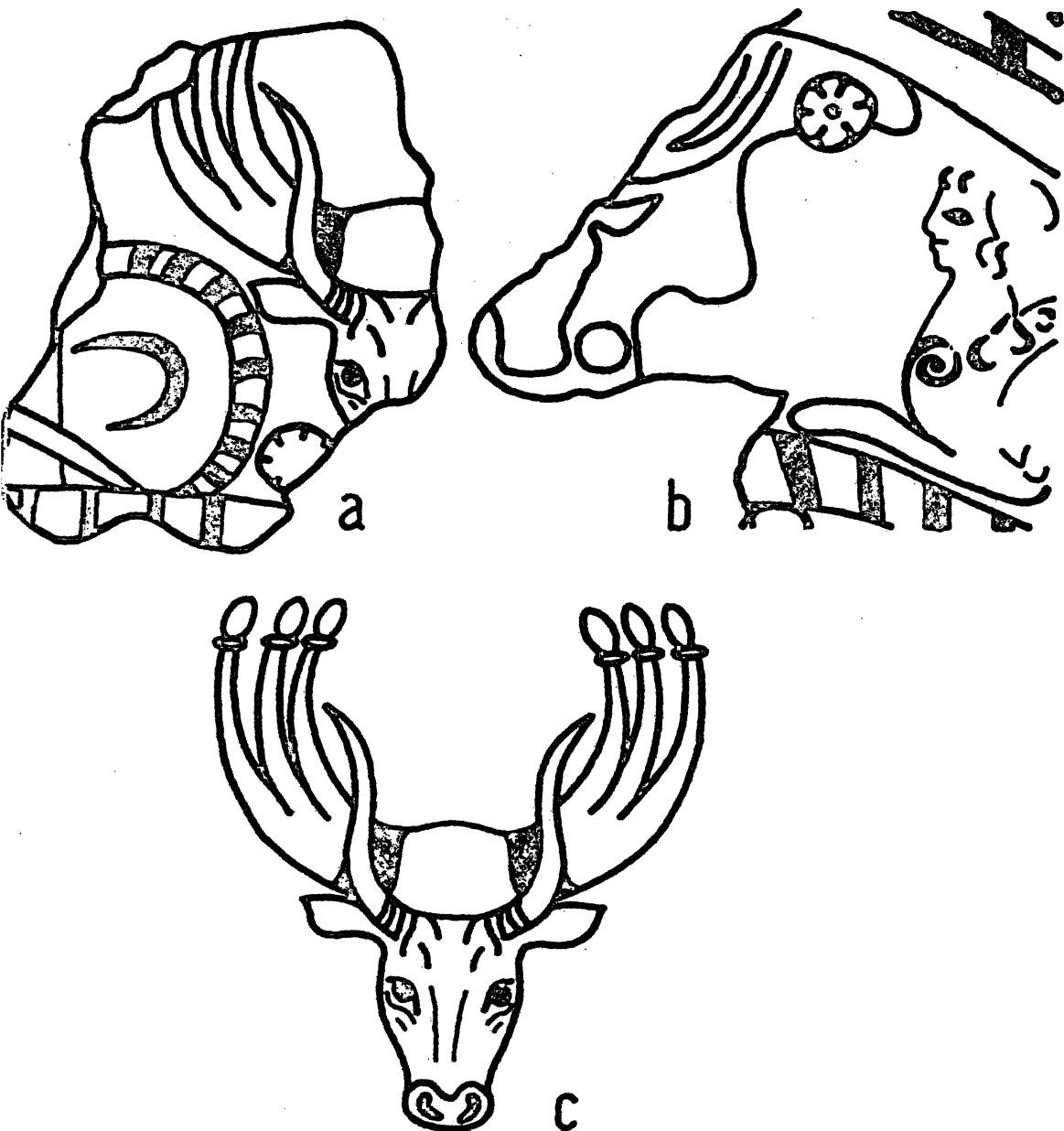


Fig. 2a, b. Fresco fragments from Knossos (Herakleion)

Fig. 2c. Possible restoration of fresco fragment from Knossos, cf. Fig. 2a

These fresco fragments are of particular interest by reason of their colour. The curving elements are white with a band of red separat-

bands that separate the area containing the bull's head and sphinx from the different system of decoration above, provided that the division between the white curves and their hypothetical yellow or perhaps red knobs coincides with the edge of the white band. E. g. *Mon. Ant.* 19, 1908, 69, Fig. 21 (fresco from H. Triada, on which a lyre overlaps the border).

ing them from the portion of yellow where they meet to balance on the bull's head. In deciding on the colours, the painter may have been influenced by one of four factors. First, the colour-scheme of the fresco as a whole may have dominated any thoughts of realistic coloration for the details. Second, as the fresco depicts cloth, the artist may have had a particular dress or piece of material in mind, recalling its hues as well as its patterns; though the textile itself would as likely as not have been imaginatively coloured. A third possibility is that the various colours are translations into paint of different metals; the painter (or textile-manufacturer) may have been inspired by the decoration on a vase such as the one in the Syrian tribute, or by the thin metal plates applied to cloth of the period. Lastly, these triple-curved 'frames' that ornamented at least one vase had an independent existence as pieces of cult paraphernalia, and the painter may have chosen to reproduce as nearly as possible the colours of one of them. The most attractive of these hypotheses is the third, white perhaps representing ivory (or pale silver); red, copper (tinted gold or reddish electrum); yellow, gold; and blue, silver (the bull's face on Fragment 2a being yellow and white, its horns blue). Perhaps the silver vase of the Egyptian relief had polychrome decoration of this nature. Such a mixture of materials has parallels in the Minoan-Mycenaean world<sup>9</sup>.

In the harbour town of Zakro, where one of the clay rhytons with goats' heads was found<sup>10</sup>, was excavated a deposit of sealings,<sup>11</sup> several of which have designs apparently inspired by the motif of 'bull's head plus accessories'. They are additional evidence that this was a standard combination, though none reproduces it in the exact form that occurs on the Knossos frescoes or the Egyptian relief. The discrepancies are not unexpected considering the nature of the group of seals to which they belong, the produce of a local workshop, and probably the inspiration of an individual. That he may have been a local genius in rebellion against the naturalistic trend of contemporary glyptic art set by craftsmen of

<sup>9</sup> E. g. The gold and silver rhyton from Mycenae, Shaftgrave IV (G. Karo, *Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai*, München 1930—3, 93, No. 384, Pls. 119—121); bronze daggers inlaid with gold (pale and dark), silver (pale and dark), electrum (pale and reddish) and black niello (M. Hirmer and S. Marinatos, *Crete and Mycenae*, London 1960, Pls. 35—8; E. Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age*, Chicago 1964, 98)

<sup>10</sup> Loc. cit. (*supra*, n. 6)

<sup>11</sup> For numbering of types, cf. D. G. Hogarth, *The Zakro Sealings*, JHS 22, 1902, 76, Pls. 6—10; D. Levi, *Le cretule di H. Triada e di Zakro*, ASAtene 8/9, 1925/6

the capital is perhaps too modern an idea. He may rather have been a madman, encouraged by fellow townsmen in the belief that stones to serve dual function as seal and talisman would acquire from his hand that extra touch of the supernatural. The character of his work can be seen in eighty or more surviving designs attributable to his hand or influence. By no means incompetent, he deliberately exaggerated, reduced or distorted the shapes of natural objects, forming monsters from the unnatural combinations of their separate parts. In the world of nightmarish transformations that he created, one can see the surrealistic working of his mind, in the substitution for one thing of another that performed a like function or that showed a chance resemblance in shape. Designs based on the motif of 'bull's head plus accessories' were the result of similar processes. Type 81 (Fig. 3a) is the most naturalistic, composed of four objects of religious significance: a pair of birds, and a bull's head with the curved construction (of alternative two-fold type) placed below instead of above. Other sealings (without the curves) have a bull's head en face with horns pointing downwards or with ram's horns replacing its own. These may have given rise to Type 88 (Fig. 3b), in which a disk and curves appear in the orthodox position above, but a moufflon's head is substituted for that of the bull. A similar composition may provide the explanation of Evans's sketch of a missing sealing from Knossos (Fig. 3c)<sup>12</sup>. The compressed design of Type 66 (Fig. 3d) seems to combine the elements of this series of motifs with another series based on a frontal lion's head. Half a double-axe swivelled at right angles to its normal direction springs from the centre of the curved construction, which in turn replaces the crown and ears of the head. On three others (Types 63—65, Fig. 3e, g, h) the head is more like that of a fox. From its muzzle sprout tusks with bulbous ends evidently referring back to the curved 'frame'<sup>13</sup>, the transformation being suggested by affinity of form, material or colour.

One of the Zakro artist's favourite themes for mutation was the eagle-woman<sup>14</sup>, a monster that combined the body, legs and dress

<sup>12</sup> M. A. V. Gill, *The Knossos Sealings: provenance and identification*, BSA 60, 1965, 58, Pl. 16, R87

<sup>13</sup> Another of Evans's sketches (Fig. 3f), recording the fragment of a missing sealing from Knossos, may show the knobbed end of a tusk from a similar design (Gill, loc. cit. supra, n. 12, Pl. 16, R73). And other sealings from Zakro (Hogarth loc. cit. supra, n. 11, Types 60-2, 69, 82, 166-7), from which the ends of the tusks are missing, may also have been inspired by curved 'frames'.

<sup>14</sup> Type 20, Hogarth loc. cit. supra, n. 11, 79, Fig. 8



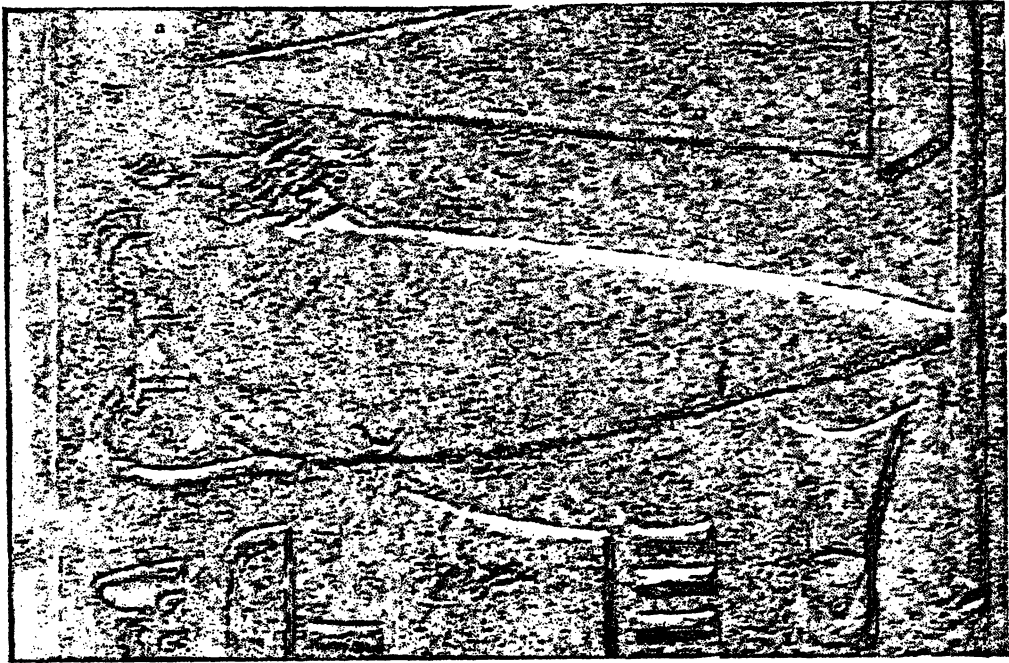
Fig. 3. Sealings. a) Type 81 from Zakro (Herakleion); b) Type 88 from Zakro (Herakleion, Oxford); c) from Knossos, as sketched in Sir Arthur Evans's Notebook (original missing); d) Type 66 from Zakro (Herakleion); e) Type 63 from Zakro (Herakleion); f) from Knossos, as sketched in Sir Arthur Evans's Notebook (original missing); g) Type 64 from Zakro (Herakleion, Oxford); h) Type 65 from Zakro (Oxford); i) Type 22 from Zakro (Herakleion)

of a woman with the head and wings of a bird. Type 22 (Fig. 3i), on which a double set of 'frames' appears without any connection with a bull's head, may belong to this series. The skirt flounces and a pair of pigeon-toed feet are clear below the curves, which are inverted to fit into the space normally occupied by the wings and breasts of the eagle-woman. Accidental similarity between the





a



b

Plate Ia, b. Vases in the Temple of Amun at Karnak

shape of the 'frame' and the outline of the wings may have suggested the change. Above the curves are either the remains of an exaggerated necklace or else raised arms, if the artist had in mind also the association of the cult objects with a goddess.

Previous studies of the curved 'frames' have used as a starting point the group of seals that illustrates most clearly this connection with one of the deities, although for the most part the seals are later in date than the Zakro sealings. On each stone the frame appears over the head of a woman, who stands with uplifted arms between attendant beasts (Figs. 4, 5)<sup>15</sup>.

The most recent discussion has introduced the question of whether the female is human or divine, and decides in favours of an earthly interpretation of the scene as portraying a priestess rather than a goddess<sup>16</sup>. Presumably the ancient artists are conceived as having depicted the climax of a rite, in which a priestess rose from the throne with the curved apparatus held on high to stand framed by lions or griffins frescoed on the wall behind<sup>17</sup>. Probably Minoan priestesses did assume this pose. Ceremonies in the newly frescoed throne-room at Knossos may have influenced the manner in which the lapidaries designed the examples shown in Fig. 4, with their griffins raised on a ground line above that of the central figure, as on a dado. But evidence is against interpretation of the seals as simple records of such events. Makers of seals were undoubtedly influenced by work in other media, employing frescoes as a reservoir of ready-made designs, but deliberate illustration of a fresco as a fresco behind a main figure is counter to the tenets of Minoan glyptic art. Lions, griffins and Minoan genii are present on these seals not to give the geographical setting of the scene, nor to fill the empty space on either side. They are as real as the central figure and an essential aid to interpretation. Their heraldic disposition and savage or mythical nature almost preclude human participation, and a design repeated on several

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<sup>15</sup> Another example of the 'frame' occurs on a haematite lentoid in the Fogg collection (V. E. G. Kenna, *Cretan and Mycenaean Seals in North America*, AJA 68, 1964, Pl. 1. 41, Pl. 2. 32, p. 11, "two gryphons attend a sacred tree on an altar; above an epiphany of the goddess. She wears the snake frames, but is aniconic"). It resembles the Ashmolean gemma dubitanda 1938. 1073 (V. E. G. Kenna, *Cretan Seals*, Oxford 1960, Pl. 20).

<sup>16</sup> G. E. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, Princeton 1966, 152—3

<sup>17</sup> H. Reusch, *Zum Wandschmuck des Thronsaales in Knossos*, in E. Grumach (ed.), *Minoica*, Berlin 1958, 334



Fig. 4. Seals. a) lentoid from Ialysos (ASAtene 1923—4, 139 Fig. 62); b) lentoid from Diktaean Cave (Oxford AE 689, PM IV 169 Fig. 130); c) lentoid from near Knossos (Herakleion 1657, BSA 1952, 275 Fig. 16); d) lentoid from Siteia (Herakleion 1753, Praktika 1955, pl. 110γ)

sealings from Knossos<sup>18</sup> places beyond doubt the divinity of the women in this type of formal composition (whether or not they are associated with 'frames'). While a priestess as representative of the divine might handle the curved 'frame' during sacred rites, the attendant beasts emphasise that it is the goddess herself and not her human deputy that the seals portray.

<sup>18</sup> A. J. Evans, *The Palace of Knossos*, BSA 7, 1900/1, 29, Fig. 9. The woman standing on top of a mountain between two lions with a shrine at her back and before her a youth, hand raised to brow in adoration, can be no less than a goddess.



Fig 5. Seals. a) lentoid from Mycenae (Athens 6442e, Arch. 1932, Pl. 28, 31); b) lentoid from Mycenae (Athens 6442f) Arch. 1932, Pl. 28, 32); c) lentoid from Knossos (Oxford 1938. 1055, PM IV 170 Fig. 133a) ; d) lentoid from the islands (REA 1947, 22 Fig. 1); e) lentoid from Menidi (Kassel, Milani, Studi e Materiale I 188 Fig. 16); f) sealing from Pylos (Athens 8552, AJA 1961, Pl. 60, 18c, d)

The theory that in Minoan art arms raised symmetrically on either side of a frontal torso are a sign of divinity<sup>19</sup>, cannot be used as extra proof of the women in the heraldic compositions being goddesses; for there is some evidence for supposing that priestesses might also adopt the divine stance<sup>20</sup>. But, whether the uplifted arms are those of goddess or priestess on any particular seal outside the group of assured goddesses with curved frames, the attitude is one well documented as possessing significance independent of the 'frame'.

Although the arms are raised primarily because of their propriety, on several seals the action serves also to support the weight of the 'frames'. These were without doubt real objects, even though the 'frame' may on occasions appear to be floating like a glyptic emblem with no material counterpart; for other attributes, such as double axes, are sometimes shown as held in the hand and sometimes as floating in the vicinity of the goddess. Although no such 'frames' have yet been excavated, their reality is guaranteed by their association with bulls' heads on the Zakro sealings and Knossos frescoes, and most of all by the Egyptian historical record of the silver vase on which one appeared as a three-dimensional decoration.

It has been suggested that the striped curving elements on the Aegina pendant (Fig. 6a) are a version of the 'frame'. This identification is probably correct, but the date and provenance of the pendant have been disputed since the end of last century and are still problematic. If it is indeed Middle Minoan, as the latest comprehensive discussion of the Aegina treasure concludes<sup>21</sup>, then it is the earliest example of the 'frame'. It is also unique in respect of its association with a male deity, and in having markings along the curves. The latter may depict a feature of 'frames'; more probably they are ornamental.

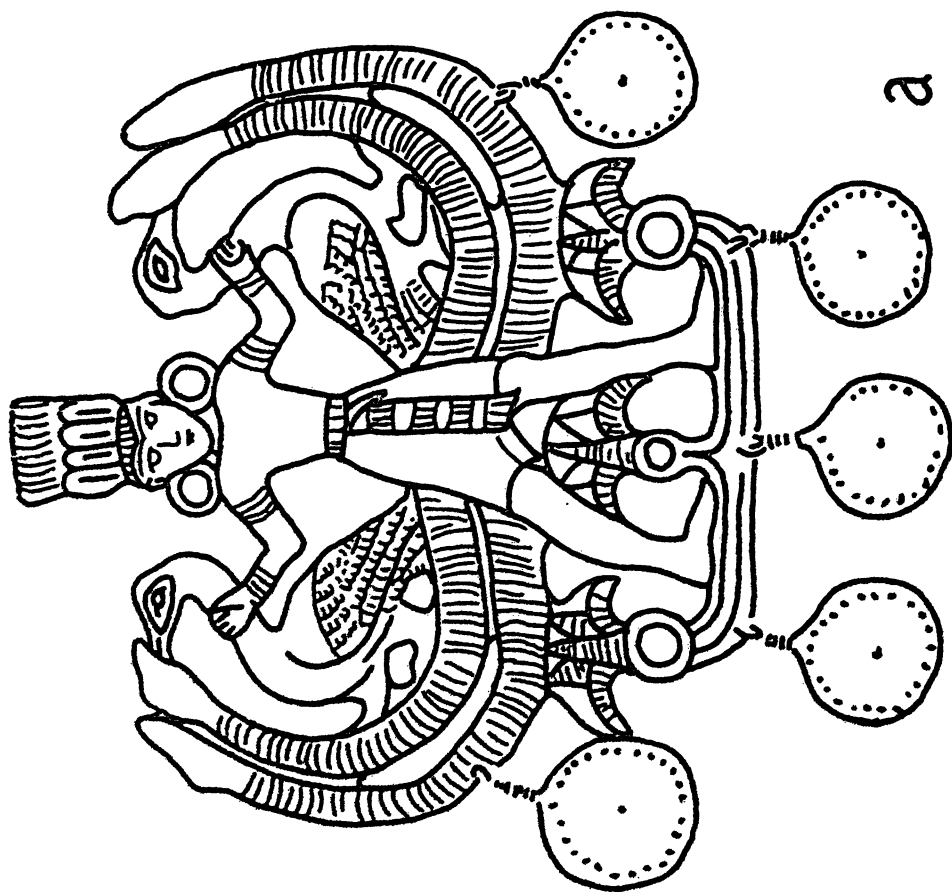
Similar incisions occur on another piece of jewellery (Fig. 6b) along two parallel objects claimed by Marinatos to be an adaptation of the Egyptian notched stick<sup>22</sup>. The Aegina pendant, he sug-

<sup>19</sup> S. Alexiou, 'Η μινωϊκή θεά μεθ' ὑψωμένων χειρῶν, Κρητικά Χρονικά 12, 1958, 179

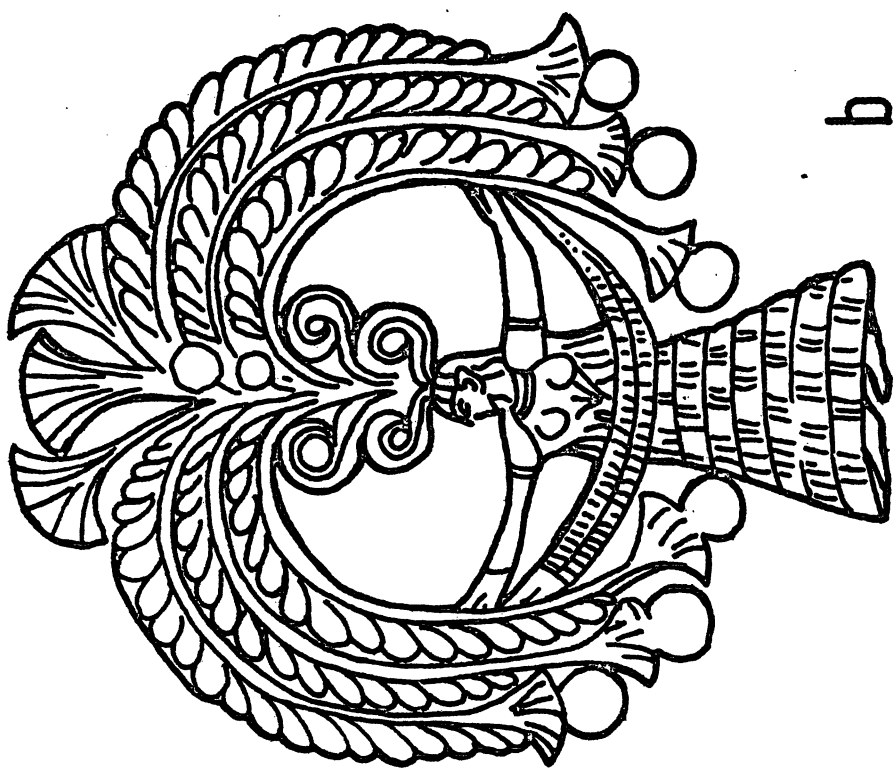
<sup>20</sup> E. g. The Isopata Ring. Hirmer and Marinatos, loc. cit. supra, n. 9, Pl. 111a. A preferable interpretation of the four figures is that all are priestesses, one of whom has assumed this stance in the course of a sacred dance.

<sup>21</sup> R. A. Higgins, The Aegina Treasure Reconsidered, BSA 52, 1957, 42

<sup>22</sup> S. Marinatos, "Numerous Years of Joyful Life" from Mycenae, BSA 46, 1951, 112



a



b

Fig. 6. a) Gold pendant from Aegina (London) b) Gold pin from Mycenae (Athens)

gests, combines these sticks with the curved 'frame', while on the pin from Mycenae the 'frame' appears independently, inverted in the form of drooping sprays of vegetation. This identification is improbable.

On a sealing from Mycenae (Fig. 7), a group of objects on the capital of a column is claimed by Mylonas to be another version of the 'frame', flat along the bottom as it has no need to curve over the head of the goddess<sup>23</sup>. Unfortunately, drawings of the sealing are inaccurate in the parts where they can be checked against a photograph<sup>24</sup>, so that it is impossible to decide which of the contradictory versions should be followed for the details obscured by shadows in the photograph; and as the general outline of the objects on the sealing differs from the standard form of 'frame', and the existence of terminal knobs is in doubt, this dubious identification is best omitted from the discussion.

None of the usual explanations of the curved 'frames', as snakes, bows or flower stems (cf. Fig. 8) is satisfactory, and their nature and significance, as well as the materials of which they were made, remain a mystery. The coloration of the fresco fragments (Fig. 2a, b) could, however, provide a clue, in that they may reflect indirectly the colour of actual 'frames'. Ivory (or whatever substance the white on the fresco represents) may have been chosen for the small-scale ornamental versions because the objects themselves were pale in colour. Evans tried to explain the fresco as based on the transportation of bundles of elephant tusks on the backs of oxen, not realizing that here was another version of his 'snake-frames'<sup>25</sup>. It is improbable that 'frames' themselves were of ivory, but they may have been of something similar. The material or its significance and not the shape alone may have led to the substitution of 'frames' for horns on an animal head in one Zakro design and the transformation of tusks into frames on others (Fig. 3d—e, g—h).

Perhaps 'frames' were made of horn. The horns of wild goats are of appropriate size and shape. But had this been the case, protuberances or markings of some description might be expected along the length of the curves on the frescoes and even on the glyptic examples of smaller scale. This absence could be explained

<sup>23</sup> Mylonas loc. cit. supra, n. 16

<sup>24</sup> A. Sakellariou, *Die Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel des Nationalmuseums in Athen*, CMS I, Berlin 1964, 34, No. 19

<sup>25</sup> Evans, PM II 742

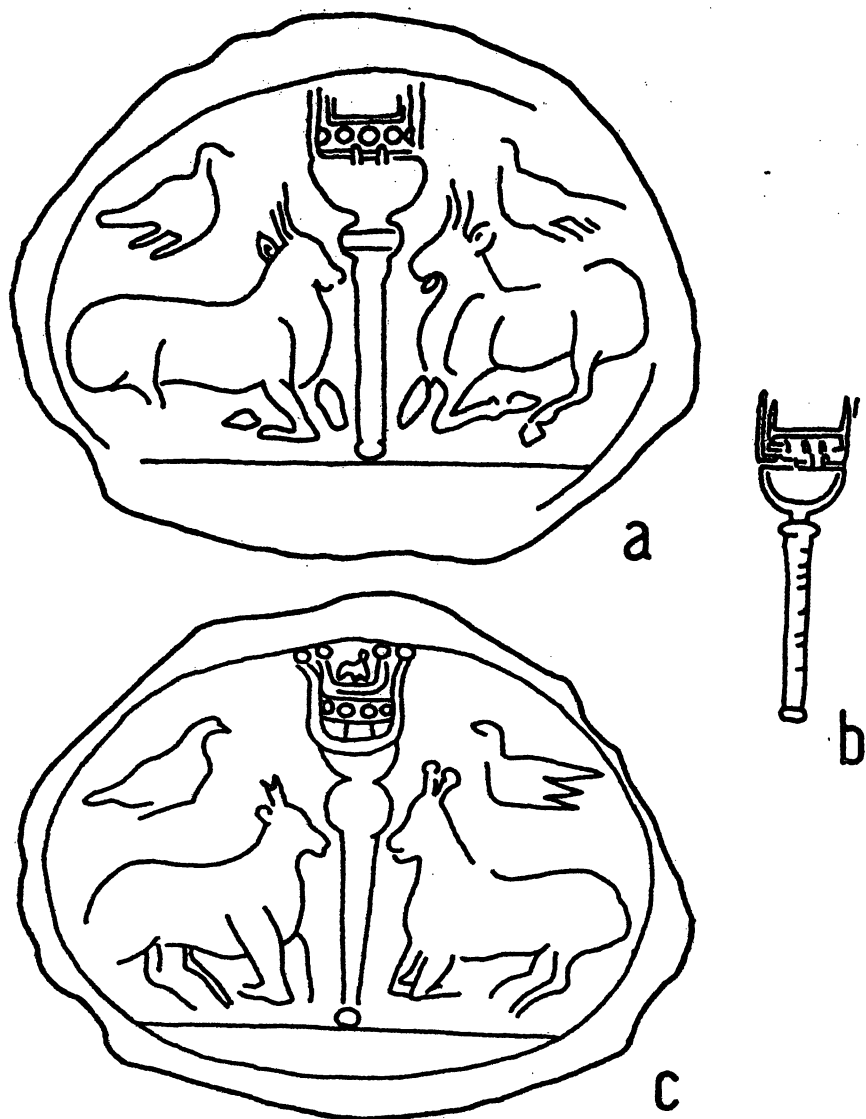


Fig. 7. Sealing from Mycenae (Athens 6246). a) based on photograph in CMS I 34 No. 19; b) column as drawn in CMS I 34 No. 19; c) design as published in Mylonas, op. cit. (n. 16)

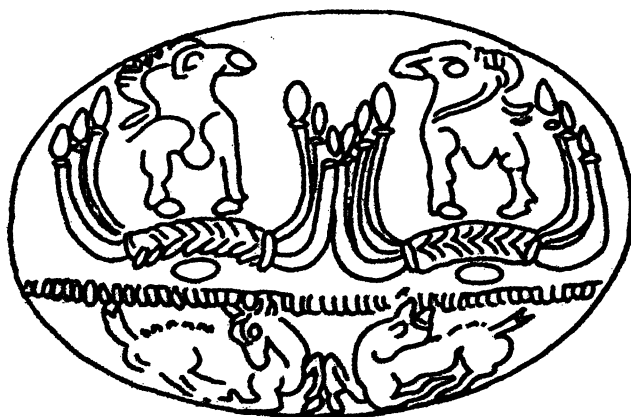


Fig. 8. Gold ring from Dendra (Athens 7327, CMS I 215 No. 189)



if, while representing horns with knobs spiked on their ends, the 'frame' was actually made of painted wood, bent into shape and bound with rope or ribbon. Such an article might symbolise wild power possessed and controlled by the goddess. This theory raises various problems. In the Near East there are occasional representations of bulls with knobs on the ends of their horns, either for ornamentation or as a protection against goring. There is no evidence that this was done in Crete, nor, if it was, that the Minoans would apply it symbolically in their religion. Also, religious practice tends to be conservative and to prefer the crude real thing to a more sophisticated substitute. But maybe if the 'frames' had a long history before their first surviving representation<sup>26</sup>, by the Late Minoan period the wooden model may have become an accepted norm.

The 'frame' was probably used by the priestess in her rôle of divine deputy, though representations on seals all depict the goddess, when 'frames' appear over the head of female figures. The goddess with the curved 'frame' is probably basically the same person in all instances, whether or not she has an additional double-axe or four-spoked disk, and whether her attendant beasts are lions, griffons or Minoan genii. Whether the seals from mainland contexts are evidence that ceremonies in her honour were performed in Mycenaean environments as well as Minoan is debatable, for on the mainland of Greece religious beliefs and practices as revealed by material remains and later traditions differ considerably from illustrations on seals.

With several of the 'frames' there is a secondary motif overhead, which may be a form of double-axe (Figs. 4a, c, 5a, b), a four-spoked disk (Fig. 3b), or a circle resting on a crescent or horns of consecration (Fig. 5f), all objects that occur elsewhere in religious contexts. On the Egyptian relief also, something rises above the bull's head and frames. In earlier photographs the details are

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<sup>26</sup> There is the slight possibility that one of the signs in the Minoan Hieroglyphic script might depict a primitive version. Hieroglyph 30 (Evans, SM I 192) has the familiar curve, nearly always ending in knobs, even in simpler inscriptions on clay. Extra lines on the hieroglyphs engraved on seals are merely ornamental additions without significance, as they do not occur in any tablet inscription. Against identification of the hieroglyph with the 'frame' is the fact that the curve of the former is always single and always has a stand at its centre in the form of a line or trapezium. Although it is usually described as a 'pronged instrument', no article of that shape has survived, nor is it depicted in any context that might illustrate its function.

difficult to discern. Weathering of the surface has blurred the outlines, and drawings of it vary (Fig. 1a ii—v). Professor Nims, after fresh examination, concludes that "the cross bar is meant to be of even width though it widens very slightly at the right . . . The bulb at the top is not round, and a bit one-sided". He "could not be certain as to how it ended at the top", but thought he "could feel and see a slight protuberance". Wreszinski<sup>27</sup> described it as a jar in the form of an open flower with a spoon projecting from its mouth (Fig. 1a iv), its function being perhaps to hold an essence that would be added to the contents of the amphora. This is an impractical arrangement; unless every drop of essence had first been ladled out of the jar, pouring from the amphora would have been a messy procedure. The purpose of the 'jar and spoon' is more likely to have been decorative. Probably it is depicted with the same degree of accuracy as the main ornament, and is likewise derived from some Minoan object of cult significance. As its general shape lacks any obvious Minoan or Mycenaean parallel, there is no certainty as to whether it should be regarded as a single article or a combination of several. The bulbous head on the end of the stem looks a little like the poppy capsules that a goddess on the Mycenae ring carries in her hand<sup>28</sup>, and a clay idol from Gazi wears on her head<sup>29</sup>. If it is sprouting from the mouth of a vase, this vase is vaguely similar to the round bowl with a flared lip balanced on a high stand on the Tiryns ring<sup>30</sup>. But the roundel and cross bar may not be a vase. Minoan artists sometimes linked motifs together, as on a mould for making jewellery from Palai-kastro<sup>31</sup>. Next to the negative for a goddess with uplifted arms holding flowers is a design consisting of a disk on a stand surmounted by horns and a plant. It is improbable that the cross bar on the Egyptian relief was a mistake for horns of consecration, but the 'jar and spoon' may have been a disk surmounted by a stand supporting a metal poppy-head.

The tribute vase of the Egyptian relief (Plate Ia, Fig. 1a), with its bull's head, 'frame', and problematic top piece, is unique; but on the same wall in a higher register is a damaged vase of similar

<sup>27</sup> Wreszinski loc. cit. *supra*, n. 1

<sup>28</sup> Sakellariou loc. cit. *supra*, n. 24, p. 30 No. 17

<sup>29</sup> Hirmer and Marinatos loc. cit. *supra*, n. 9, Pls. 130—1

<sup>30</sup> Sakellariou loc. cit. *supra*, n. 24, p. 202 No. 43

<sup>31</sup> Eph. Arch. 1900, Pl. III, 1

shape which may once have been similarly embellished<sup>32</sup>. The photograph (Plate Ib) seems to indicate considerable surface wear affecting the outline of the vase on its right shoulder, the bottom of the right handle and the top of the adjacent article. In the appropriate places on the body of the vase and the background are incisions corresponding to the curving outline of a 'frame', while the surface seems to have been rasped where the bull's head might be expected and in an upward extension roughly the shape of the top piece. The damage does not appear accidental nor malicious, either random in view of its inaccessibility or intentional in view of the survival of the other vase in the lower register; but it does give the impression that a bull's head and accessories were deliberately removed. Perhaps there was only one bull-headed vase in the tribute, and the ornament was added by mistake to the gold amphora of the higher register. If the outlines had been cut too deep to enable the erroneous carving to be shaved smooth, plaster may have been used to cover the mistake. The surface would have been deliberately roughened with a rasp to give the plaster a firmer grip. The surrounding 'wear' may be the result of a preliminary attempt to eradicate the error.

The material and exact significance of 'frames' in Crete and Greece, and the nature of the top piece on the Egyptian relief, are still problematic. The latter, despite absence of parallel and proof, was probably based on a Minoan prototype, for, even if the vase was not an actual Minoan artefact, there can be little doubt that the main decoration was influenced by Minoan forms, and no doubt at all that the six curving elements represent the familiar triple-curved 'frame' of Minoan and Mycenaean art and religion.

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<sup>32</sup> Wreszinski loc. cit. supra, n. 1, Pl. 33 No. 49; Vercoutter, loc. cit. supra, n. 1, Pl. XLIII No. 315