The Mycenean golden kylix of the Benaki Museum: A dubitandum?

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If I was handed a riddle,
I gave it back a riddle.
I was content not to know
The solution to a yesterday, 
An it depends,
The mystery of the asymptotes.

Kiki Dimoula**

When I wrote the entry on the Benaki Museum golden kylix inv. no. 2108 (figs 1-11, 16) for the exhibition catalogue Greek Treasures from the Benaki Museum in Athens,¹ I never suspected the trials and tribulations I would undergo in order to complete the scholarly publication of this object. With only infrequent mentions to its credit in the literature and tending to have been forgotten for some time,² the gold kylix, which, according to such references as are associated with it to date, was a work of the Mycenaean period, needed more thorough study. However, as the research progressed, there were so many ways in which the vessel was seen to diverge from what is known about Mycenaean goldsmiths' work, as to change the detailed publication into a painstaking check on its authenticity.³ This was all the more necessary as the artefact had been bought on the art market.

The question of the authenticity of objects from antiquity, acquired by museums through purchases or gifts, was already well known from as early as the nineteenth century, but remains a thorny issue.⁴ Even if state-of-the-art laboratory analyses, used in conjunction with iconographic and stylistic approaches, have to a large extent solved complex problems regarding certain types of materials, such as clay or bone, many technical questions remain unanswered as regards objects made of other materials, such as for example metals, wood or marble – above all the outstanding questions as to the date of their production.

The decisive significance of iconographic studies and stylistic analysis thus becomes evident. Nevertheless it is not unusual for reservations about the authenticity of an object, based on the uniqueness of certain iconographic elements or some incompatibility in the style, to be resolved by later finds from excavations, which provide the necessary comparative material.⁵

It goes without saying that expressing doubts about the authenticity of a work of art in an official way is no easy matter.⁶ This is all the more true, when it is a gold vessel, i.e. made of the most incorruptible metal, which is little affected by the amount of time or the conditions in which it has been buried.

The gold kylix inv. no. 2108 was bought on 12.1.1939 by the then newly established Benaki Museum for 153,000 drachmas, the same year as the gold Thebes ‘Jewellery Ensemble’ was purchased.⁷ These exceptionally important acquisitions formed the basis of the Mycenaean Collection, hitherto non-existent, something which to a large extent explains Antony Benaki’s pride, expressed in the well-known photograph of 1950, which has since been reproduced so many times as to become the Museum’s photographic logo (fig. 12).⁸ According to the cup’s entry...
in the Museum’s register, it was bought from one “Mar. Vlachos” (the first name is not written out in full), whose identity I have been unable to establish. This official record is not accompanied by any reference to details relating to its provenance.

The reason why this vase – despite its importance – has never been the subject of a detailed publication probably lies above all in the private nature of the Benaki Museum and consequently the fact that most of its objects are of unknown provenance, given that they were acquired through gifts or purchases. It was perhaps reservations in this respect which prevented Ellen Davis from including the Benaki Museum kylix in the publication of her thesis, though it does contain extensive references to
other precious vessels of unknown provenance.

The prolonged silence of scholars as regards such an important object, however, is perhaps also indicative of the unofficial doubts about its authenticity. Suspicions of this nature apparently troubled the former Director of the Benaki Museum, Manolis Chatzidakis, who must have mentioned it to the physicist Alex Hartmann, when he was carrying out spectroscopic analyses on some of the Museum’s metal objects. In a letter dated 8.8.1972, kept in the museum’s archives, Hartmann gives his opinion, noting that he is relatively certain that the composition of the metal used for the kylix was consistent with the evidence gathered from the area of the Eastern Mediterranean concerning the prehistoric period. A little further down, responding to what had probably been an anxiety Chatzidakis had expressed by word of mouth,12 he concludes that it was possible that some modern forger could have used ancient material. At the same time he asked if there were any significant stylistic or other criteria which could substantiate such a hypothesis.13 In any event, the cup was not included in Hartmann’s important monograph, published in 1982.14

A new study of the artefact could not be carried out without the contribution of modern laboratory analyses, and this time on selected Mycenaean gold vessels from sys-

tematic excavations. Thus the gold goblets inv. nos 427 and 656 from Mycenae Grave Circle A, inv. nos 957 and 959 from the Mycenae Acropolis Treasure and the gold cup inv. no. 8743 from Chamber Tomb 10 at Midea in Argolis were collectively examined both macroscopically and microscopically, as well as using spectroscopic analysis in the laboratories of the Athens National Archaeological Museum.

The kylix in question has a hemispherical body with the lip everted to form a horizontal rim, a cylindrical, hollow interior, high stem which widens a little towards the top and a base with curved sides (figs 1-4, 16).\(^{15}\) It was made by hammering out four separate, quite thick sheets, one for the body, one for the stem, one for the base and one for the handle (thickness of sheet on the body and the lip: 0.5 mm, base: 0.3 mm, edge of handle: 1 mm). The body is decorated with three relief animals in single file, represented in the “flying gallop” pose. The slightly raised handle, with a width at its narrowest point of 1 cm and at its broadest of 1.8 cm, has a slight vertical rib hammered from below. The ends of the sheet are rolled up, thus reinforcing its edges (fig. 7). On its upper surface and on the central rib it is decorated with 21 continuously linked, heart-shaped leaves (figs 4-7, 16).

The three component parts of the vessel (body, stem and base) are joined together with solder, which was confirmed both by macroscopic and microscopic examination, and using X-radiography (see below, D. Kotzamanis et al., Technical report). There is also solder along the vertical axis of the stem at the attachment points of the sheet. In the areas of soldering a slight colour difference from the base material was observed. According to the results of the qualitative analysis it seems that a gold alloy with a small silver content and very little copper was used (see below, Kotzamanis et al., p. 47 table 1). The small hole in the joint between the foot and the base was possibly created during the soldering process (fig. 4). The handle is attached to the lip with two rivets and to the body by one. Around the edge of the three hemispherical rivet heads (0.5 cm wide) on the inside of the cup part of the original sheet from which they were made has been preserved (fig. 6). The rivets on the lip end on the outside in just two wires, bent outwards in diametrically opposed directions and then hammered down (fig. 7). The rivet holding the handle to the body has a small circular head on the outside (0.25 cm wide), which has been beaten flush with the surface of the handle (figs 4, 7).

At the centre of the bottom both inside and out, two circular impressions have been observed (fig. 5).
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Fig. 11. Drawing of the hunting dogs on the golden kylix. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 2108 (drawing: K. Mavragani).

Fig. 12. Antony Benaki contemplating the golden kylix.
Typological approach – Questions of dating

At first glance, the Benaki Museum gold kylix, with its by no means fluid contours and the separate volumes of the body and the foot, gives the impression of a work made in accordance with the Mycenaean style. Concerning the shape of the body and the formation of the stem with the slightly convex contour, it shows affinities with the Mycenaean gold kylix from the Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire in Brussels (fig. 13). With no evidence as to its provenance, the Brussels cup has been dated to the beginning of the LHI period, though the shape of its body and the tall stem would suggest that it might have been made in the LHII.16 The offset everted lip of the Benaki vase is found in Mycenaean vessels made from precious metals, as for example the four gold kylikes from the Mycenae Acropolis Treasure from the LHIIIB-IIIA1 period (figs 14-15)17 or the one-handed silver goblet from a Chamber Tomb in Midea of much the same chronological horizon.18 The form of its banded, slightly raised handle, which narrows towards the...
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If we try to find the ceramic equivalent of the Benaki Museum artefact, we shall run into difficulties, given that its almost absolutely hemispherical body is not found in any type of clay kylix, which do not appear with a high foot, before the LH/LMIII A. If we treat the body as an independent unit, we can agree that it undeniably points to the semi-globular cup FS 211 of the LHIIA period (fig. 17), as well as the ephyraean goblet FS 254 of the LHIIIB period, which has a narrow stem but a broad, slightly concave base (fig. 18). The tall stem, accounting for about half of its height, which narrows towards the bottom, recalls the stem of the ceramic kylix of the LHIII A1 period (fig. 19), but the base, slightly concave, does not become established in the typology of the kylix before the end of this period or the beginning of the next one (FS 256) (fig. 20).

The foregoing makes it evident that the Benaki Museum vessel has no precise parallels either in metal or indeed in ceramic cups. At this point it should in any case be emphasized that, although certain types of ceramic vases derive from metallic prototypes, which they obviously copy, one can nevertheless discern the peculiarities of each material, which to a large extent determine the typological characteristics of each category of wares. In any event, the individual morphological characteristics of the Benaki Museum cup point to a dating range in the LHII and LHIII A1 periods, a time when, as we know, the majority of Mycenaean gold wares were produced.

Issues of technology and composition of the alloy

Nevertheless, as regards the technique of its production, the Benaki Museum’s gold cup differs in certain points from those works of gold- and silverware of the second millennium BC known to date. As mentioned above, apart from the three rivets used to attach the handle to the body, the soldering technique, using a metal alloy, was employed to join body, stem and base.

Though this technique was known as early as the end of the fourth millennium BC in Mesopotamia and was already in use in the Aegean by the Early Bronze Age, the practice of soldering together individual parts of metal objects seems not to have been adopted on a large scale by Aegean craftsmen in the second millennium BC. As technical analyses and macroscopic examination show it was used with great skill on small-scale objects d’art, such as the Minoan and Mycenaean gold signet rings.

The gold and silver vessels of the second millennium BC were usually beaten into shape from one sheet of metal. If they were formed from separate pieces, they were generally attached using small rivets, whose heads were hammered flush with the sheet metal on the outside, so as to be indiscernible. Solder was sometimes used to join parts of the handle, or to attach extra elements (cladding foils, a separately manufactured rim in some other material, decorative strips or rings) to the surface of the object. However, in at least three cases the use of solder has been identified in the attachment of individual parts of a vessel: the one-handled electrum cup, part of the grave goods of Mycenaean Shaft Grave IV, on which the stem has been soldered to the body; the silver crater with a battle scene in repoussé from the same grave, on which the neck has been similarly attached to the shoulder (which is of a piece with the body) and a one-handled silver goblet from Chamber Tomb 10 at Dendra, whose stem has been joined to the separately created body. Indeed, according to Sakellariou, solder must have been used to join the neck and body of a silver ewer from Mycenaean Shaft Grave IV, in which the marks of a ‘seam’ are covered by a torus moulding articulating the join between the neck and the body.

Though the alloy used to join the individual parts of the Benaki Museum’s gold cup is consistent with what is already known about the soldering of sheet metal in the prehistoric era, the fact that it was constructed not just of three but four separate parts (body, stem, base and handle) makes it unique, according to our current knowledge.

The banded handle was attached to the cup by mechanical means, i.e. using rivets. The attachment of two rivets in the area of the lip and one for the body aligns it with the technical characteristics of Mycenaean gold- and silverware (figs 5–6). However, the presence of rivets on the lip, when the latter is everted, rather than below it, does deviate from normal practice. As has been noted, the Aegean craftsmen usually chose to attach the handle to an object with an offset lip in the area below it, so as to avoid any possible damage to the sheet metal, which was particularly susceptible to damage where it had been beaten into sharp angles. The only exceptions, apart from the Benaki Museum cup, are a gold goblet from the Mycenae Acropolis Treasure and the four gold cups from the same...
hoard with modelled dogs’ heads at the upper ends of the handles.40

The large, rounded rivet heads on the inside are entirely consistent with what is known of Aegean metallurgy. In fact, according to Davis, these types of heads suggest Minoan production or local imitation of Minoan work and they must have been formed using a punch or a mould.41 Traces of the sheet metal initially used to make them were not, however, found around the rivet heads of any of the Mycenaean gold and silver vessels in the National Archaeological Museum. The presence of such residues on the rivet heads on the Benaki Museum cup (fig. 6) could be attributable to careless workmanship.

The external end of the rivet used on the body has been

Fig. 16. Drawings of the golden kylix. Athens, Benaki Museum, inv. no. 2108 (drawings: K. Mavragani).

Fig. 17. Semi-globular cup FS 211 (after: Mountjoy 1986, fig. 31.4).
Fig. 18. Ephyraean goblet FS 254 (after: Mountjoy 1986, fig. 54.2).
Fig. 19. Kylix (after: Mountjoy 1986, fig. 76.1).
Fig. 20. Kylix FS 256 (after: Mountjoy 1986, fig. 106.1).
beaten flush with the metal, thus fashioning a small, flat head, which is entirely consistent with the treatment seen on the body of metal vessels from the second millennium BC. By contrast the way in which the rivets have been attached to the lip shows some peculiarities. The rivets pass through the sheet gold of the vessel and the handle and end in single wires, which have been hammered down in opposite directions (fig. 7). It should, however, be noted that in at least one case a similar form of attachment, though not exactly the same, is seen on a one-handled gold cup from Shaft Grave IV of Grave Circle A, where the ends of the rivets at the rim were split into two, with each half hammered down separately (fig. 21).42

The rolling upwards of the edges of the sheet used to form the handle is a common technical detail in Mycenaean gold- and silverware with hammered, banded handles.43 As indeed was evident from a macroscopic examination, the edges of the handle on the Benaki Museum vase do not enclose strengthening wires, as happens only in Mycenaean wares made of precious metals. Yet some of them do not have the reinforcing wires, so the Benaki Museum kylix is not necessarily different in this respect.44

The fashioning of the 21 repeated heart-shaped leaves, which run the length of the vertical axis of the handle (figs 4, 16), right on the central rib, was done using a punch from the outside before the handle was attached to the body, as is indicated by the fact that it is possible to touch the motifs on the lower surface of the handle. The last leaf at the bottom of the handle was depicted in a very schematic fashion. Though the decoration on gold- and silverware in the Late Bronze Age is mainly repoussé, chased or even moulded, the use of a punch has been confirmed both in this group of vessels and on copper and/or bronze wares of the same period.45

The three animals which encircle the body are depicted in repoussé technique (figs 1-4, 8-10, 11). It is generally accepted that the craftsman first sketched the outline of the image on the outer surface and then, by striking the metal with the appropriate tools from the inside, he created the relief sculpture. Then, once the vessel had been filled with some soft material (e.g. sand, plaster or lead), it was beaten into shape from the outside, giving it its final form. The final details were put in last of all by chasing and/or engraving.46 The absence of traces of toolmarks on the hollows created by the bodies of the three animals on the inside of the kylix – something also observed in the case of

Fig. 21. Golden cup from the Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae (detail). Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 313 (photo: I. Miari).

Fig. 22. Sealing from Room 105 at the Palace of Pylos (after: CMSI, 363).

Fig. 23. Seal from a building at Kynos, Lamia (after: CMS VS.1B, 3).

Fig. 24. Cylinder seal from the Tholos Tomb 3 at Koukounara, Pylos (after: CMS VS.1B, 190).

Fig. 25. Seal said to come from Knossos (after: CMS VI, 179).
The National Archaeological Museum’s gold goblet inv. no. 656 (fig. 32) – could either be due to careful grinding and polishing of the area, or to these particular vessels having been hammered on a carved stone mould.47

The animals are each of slightly different lengths, whereas the distances between them and between the handle and the animals on either side of it are identical.49 It is not at all unusual in Mycenaean metalwork for the positioning of the handle to be precisely calculated in advance, so that the point of attachment would be in complete symmetry with the existing decoration.50

The presence of incisions on the inner and outer surfaces, right at the centre of the bottom, should not raise any questions. Similar marks have been recorded in quite a few Minoan and Mycenaean gold and silver vessels on one side of the disk-shaped base or the bottom of the vase, and have been attributed to the use of compasses.51 The same phenomenon occurs in the only recorded instance of a double mark, on both the inside and outside surfaces of the base, in a silver cup from Mycenae Chamber Tomb 78, which is decorated with repoussé tricurved arches.52 It should be noted that a similar double mark was also observed on the gold cup.
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(inv. no. 8743) with the repoussé ivy leaves from Chamber Tomb 10 at Midea, when it was examined in the laboratories of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens (see below, Kotzamani et al., p. 52 figs 19-20).  

The possibility of tracing the double mark back to the use of a lathe in the final processes of working and polishing the vessels, should not, of course, be excluded, though it would have been hard to fix objects which were hollow inside. Despite the fact that the use of the lathe on Greek soil is only officially recorded in the sources from the fifth century BC, there is in any case no doubt that it was also used in the archaic period, while there has been speculation as to its presence in the workshops of furniture-makers and stone carvers from as early as the Minoan period. 

It has also been considered likely that this rotary tool was used by Mycenaean metalworkers in the last stage of shaping gold vessels, although this judgement is based on the regular shape of certain vessels and not on the existence of a double mark on the inner and outer surfaces of their bases. The earliest evidence of the use of a lathe in the Mediterranean comes, in any case, from the Egypt of the Second Transitional Period/early 18th Dynasty, where

Fig. 29. Wall painting with a hunting scene from the Palace of Tiryns. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 5881 (photo: NAM).
it seems more or less certain that wooden furniture was turned on something of this nature.58

Given that the Aegean vessels, on which the double mark has been identified to date, have elaborate repoussé decoration, it is very likely that both marks come from the impression left by the dividers used not only for the initial measurements taken in order to shape a circular sheet but also for the measurements relating to the arrangement of the decoration on the body.

However, as to the composition of the metal, the Benaki Museum cup presents significant differences in relation to the analyses carried out to date on gold vessels and ornaments of the second millennium BC from the Aegean and mainland Greece. According to the results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis, the kylix was made of a pure gold which has a very small amount of silver and a very low copper content. Its exceptionally high gold content, at 98.8%, has not up to now been identified in any example of Minoan or Mycenaean goldsmith’s work discovered in systematic excavations.59 The results of the analyses carried out on the occasion of this study on selected Mycenaean gold vessels from the Athens National Archaeological Museum and on the jewellery from the Thebes 'Jewellery Ensemble' from the Benaki Museum, in fact, support the opinion that the level of gold in the alloys used in Mycenaean times varied on average between 65% and 90% (see below, Kotzamani et al., p. 53 table 2). Some Creto-Mycenaean rings constitute a possible exception, but their gold content does not exceed, but the order of 96.5%.60 At this point it should be emphasized that the gold objects from the Benaki Museum published below, Kotzamani et al., p. 53 table 2, (inv. nos 27515 and 27516) with a similar purity to that of the kylix inv. no. 2108 are acquisitions of dubious authenticity, which, though they look like Mycenaean works, have several stylistic and iconographic peculiarities compared with the genuine articles.

The base material of the kylix could come into the category of native gold, had trace elements, such as iron or tin, been identified in it,61 but it was not possible to detect them. So it is either a noteworthy exception among native golds,62 or it should be categorized as refined gold, i.e. the result of removing the copper and silver in the cupellation process and by separation respectively (see below, Kotzamani et al., pp. 46–48). Though a process most likely to have been understood from as early as the mid-second millennium BC, as written sources from Egypt and Mesopotamia confirm, it is generally agreed that the refining of gold was not in widespread use for another thousand years, i.e. until after the introduction of coinage.63 Despite all this, of those objects from the second millennium BC from the Eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia which have been analysed, three (which do not come from systematic excavations) have been identified, on the basis of the levels of the various constituent elements in the alloy of their base material, as having been made using refined gold.64

All this demonstrates that “the analysis is not some magical panacea for problems of authenticity or origin”, as others have rightly noted,65 all the more so as the majority of Aegean gold objects of the second millennium BC have not been analysed, nor, of course, has the question of the provenance of Mycenaean gold been solved.66

Iconographical Analysis

The kylix inv. no. 2108 is decorated on the body with three repoussé animals, which are depicted running one behind the other going from right to left. Their elongated bodies with the long necks, their equally long tails and legs, and the depiction of the ribs leave no doubt that the craftsman intended to depict hunting dogs. But it is a different matter when it comes to the heads. Though they are all slightly different, the heads of the three hounds could be those of a wolf or a deer, as the characteristic angularity rendering the projection of the eyebrow arches which, in complete accordance with the natural model, is found in most depictions of dogs in Creto-Mycenaean art, is missing (figs 8–10). The excessively long ears, especially in the middle dog and the one on the left of the handle (figs 8–9, 11), suggest alternatively the depiction of a hare. Consequently it is not surprising that in the early references to the kylix the animals were identified as hares,67 despite the fact that this would be ruled out by the elongated, long-haired tail.

The depiction of animals and plants with hybrid characteristics is in any case not unknown in the Aegean art of the Late Bronze Age and undoubtedly has to do with what it sets out to achieve, which tends to be quite different from a realistic/photographic reproduction.68 It should also be noted that it is not unusual for the depiction of a dog in Minoan or Mycenaean art to be confused with that of a wolf or a lion, though mainly in small-scale creations.69 In any case, in none of the depictions of dogs known to date...
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The hounds on the Benaki stemmed cup are quite reminiscent of the dog wearing a collar, which races after a deer, evidently hunting it, on a LHIII seal from the Palace at Pylos (fig. 22). The ears of the animal depicted to the right of the handle are not dissimilar in shape and form to those of the standing bitch depicted in LMIII sealings from Knossos (fig. 30), while the long tail with the thick hair, represented with oblique chased lines, has strong similarities with the tails of the heraldically arranged hounds on either side of a biconcave altar on LMIII sealings from Knossos (fig. 31). The depiction of the animal’s ribs is a commonplace in seal carving, especially during the Late Bronze Age, while hounds without collars are as likely to take part in hunting scenes as those wearing them.

The iconographic motif on the Benaki kylix, nevertheless, directly suggests the galloping lions which decorate the LH I gold goblet from Shaft Grave V of Grave Circle A at Mycenae (fig. 32), which accompanied one of the distinguished deceased males (apparently a member of the local military aristocracy) into the afterlife as an insignium of prestige or social status. The comparison between the two gold vessels is in any case strengthened by the absence of any kind of landscape, representing the natural accompaniment to the action depicted. In turn the lions encircling the body of the goblet from Mycenae call to mind, though from a different point of view, those depicted galloping through a rocky landscape, which decorate in emblematic fashion the two sides of a bronze dagger from Shaft Grave IV of the same Grave Circle.

This particular motif, probably of Minoan origin, but established in the Mycenaean iconographic cycle of authority/power, as it probably derives from the iconography of the hunt, has been interpreted as a symbol of aggression, militancy and speed, essential elements for a successful outcome in battle. Following the same line of thought and in accordance with the principle of simulation these properties are transferred to the object bearing the scene and consequently to its owner, thus comparing him with the animal depicted. However, the appearance of the motif of lions at a flying gallop pose on a gold goblet, an undoubted status symbol and a vessel with obvious references to practices of a ceremonial nature, reinforces, one could say, the value of this particular symbol as a “Repräsentationsmittel”, in connection, of course, with the high social status of the deceased.
Returning to the Benaki Museum kylix, we should consequently be asking if the depiction of hounds at a flying gallop pose is acceptable particularly from an iconographical point of view.

As mentioned above, the motif of hounds galloping is usually found incorporated in hunting scenes, in which for the most part there is a human presence depicted. In isolation, as *pars pro toto*, it is only found depicted on the bone plaque from the Tholos Tomb at Menidi, where, however, the identification of the animal remains uncertain (fig. 33), and on some LHIIIB and LHIIIC sherds from Pictorial Style vases, which most probably preserve part of some larger composition. In any case, the cast dogs/heads which act as terminals on the handles of four gold kylikes of the LHIIIB-IIIA1 period found deposited outside Grave Circle A on the Acropolis at Mycenae (figs 14-15) (plunder from grave robbing in ancient times) give us a strong indication that it was possible to use the motif of the hound in isolation on a gold vessel. On all four, undoubtedly products of the same workshop if not of the same craftsman, the animal is depicted wearing a collar and with an open mouth with which it bites the rim of the cup. Although the idea of depicting the head of an animal on the upper end of a handle was already well known in mainland Greece, the choice of a dog’s head in this motif (i.e. biting the rim) is perhaps insinuating some indirect reference to its aggression and consequently its hunting prowess. No doubt the motif of the hound is deeply rooted in the Aegean iconographic repertoire of the second millennium BC. Standing, lying down or sitting, at rest, scratching an ear and barking, racing or arranged heraldically, dogs are represented in isolation in various media from as early as the Early Bronze Age (figs 30-31, 34): stone and clay vessels, seals and sealings, jewellery, ivories and wall-paintings. In scenes relating to the hunt they appear from the Early Bronze Age onwards, but in the main from the early LMIA/LCI/LHI period and thereafter (figs 22-29, 35), while they sometimes accompany male or female figures (figs 36-37) or even a Minoan genius. The subject enters the animal world of Minoan and Mycenean figurines, if sporadically, from the Middle Bronze Age and is found extremely rarely with a completely different symbolic value in Aegean rhyta in the form of animal heads. Consequently, one could say that the position of the dog in the Creto-Mycenaean iconographic repertoire is far from marginal. In support of this opinion it is worth mentioning a few selected examples of Creto-Mycenaean seal carving in which this animal is depicted as the bearer of a particular meaning. In eighteen LMIIIA1 sealings from the Wooden Staircase and Secretaries’ Bureau in Knossos heraldically placed hounds with collars turn their heads to look back, resting their front paws on a biconcave altar, in a well-known iconographic motif, in which lions are more usually depicted, but also sometimes griffins and apes (fig. 31). Given the religious significance of the biconcave altar as a symbol of divine protection, it would be reasonable to consider the presence of the hounds as reinforcing the talismanic power of the altar. With much the same significance the animal is depicted on a LHIIA seal stone from the Tholos Tomb at Vapheio above a frieze of schematized half rosettes, a coded depiction, according to a recently argued opinion, of the concept “palace” (fig. 34). As accompanying animals, hounds appear on a small group of seals and sealings flanking a male figure of the Master of Animals type (fig. 37). On the basis of the physical features of this particular animal too then we can maintain, in an initial approach to the
subject, that the hound is found in the Aegean repertoire in two basic iconographic cycles: the one in which its status as a guardian/companion whether in the earthly or in the divine sphere is emphasized and that of the hunt, in which its supreme capability as a hunter-beast is stressed.

The signifying status of the hound in the iconography of the hunt was pointed out relatively recently because of the possible sacrifice of two hounds in the LHIIIB-early LHIIIC Chamber Tomb at Galata in the Peloponnese, which can be added to other, long familiar cases of placing dogs in tholos and chamber tombs of the Late Bronze Age on mainland Greece and Crete. As indeed has been asserted, the offering of dogs in Mycenaean tombs represents some sort of grave gift made to the deceased in an attempt to connect the elites of the period with the activity of hunting and its symbolic references. Nor, of course, should it be considered mere chance that this custom puts in a somewhat emphatic appearance in the LHIII A period, a time when the social hierarchy had been established, the central authority had been set up in the various regions and the local elites were proclaiming their existence in the life hereafter too. The hunt [κυν/Θ], in the nomenclature of which – even in the Linear B texts – the dog stands out as the preeminent component (κ/Θνα+ἄγω), is an activity which by definition takes place outside the limits of the city and as such is out of the ordinary and dangerous. Therefore it lends itself to the display of special skills, the possession of which constitutes an ideal means of replicating power and/or authority.

If this is how things stand, then decorating a gold vessel with hounds at a flying gallop pose, where the scene directly refers to the idea of the hunt, seems entirely consistent with what we know of the period. This is all the more true given the fact, as has already been mentioned, that the dog is often chosen as the main and sole motif, in other words it has acquired a symbolic and/or emblematic character in the Minoan and Mycenaean iconographic repertoire.

Finally it is worth examining the decorative motif on the handle which is also of special interest. The length of the vertical axis of the handle on the Benaki Museum’s gold kylix is decorated with a series of heart-shaped motifs in a chain arrangement, in such a way that the sharp pointed top of one fits into the ‘body’ of the next one (figs 4-6, 16). The decoration on the sheet forming the handle was completed before it was bent to attach it to the body of the cup, with the result that two leaves are now invisible (fig. 11). This particular motif, with its linear, heart-shaped outline has been thought to be a schematized depiction of an ivy leaf, a subject known to have an accepted Minoan provenance.

Sharp-pointed ivy leaves are found in isolation from...
as early as the MMII in seal carving and as the central motif on LMI talismanic seals and sealings. In chain form it appears as a main ornament or as filling motif on Minoan pottery from the LMI period onwards and on Mycenaean pottery from the LHIIA period, while it is not unknown in Mycenaean minor arts (figs 38-39).

The presence of this motif on the handle of the Benaki Museum’s gold vase would perhaps surprise us, if a gold kantharos had not been discovered in 1976 in a MH/LHI Tomb at Peristeria with exactly the same motif, in repoussé this time, decorating both its handles (fig. 40). One of them there are seven leaves, while the other has six, with the extra leaf on one handle not conspicuous, as it is situated at the point where the sheet is bent back next to the lip. This little-known precious artefact undoubtedly offers an important parallel as regards the decoration of the handle, though it must be stressed that the decorative motif on the Benaki Museum vessel only occupies the space of the central rib of the handle, while on the kantharos from Peristeria it spreads all around it. This idea, that is to cover the whole of the handle with a decorative motif, is found moreover in all the gold and silver Aegean vessels with decorated handles of the Late Bronze Age known to date.

The co-existence of heart-shaped ivy leaves with a scene from the world of hunting on the Benaki Museum kylix may conceal yet another, deeper connection between the two iconographic motifs, as at least is indicated by the poros-stone stele once erected on Tomb Gamma of Grave Circle B at Mycenae: here, used as fillers in the main battle scene between animals and between people and animals, a motif reminiscent of a biconcave altar is depicted at the upper left while at the lower left there is a sharp-pointed ivy leaf.

With all the above in mind we inevitably arrive at a series of questions, which may do more to obscure the issue of the authenticity of the Benaki Museum’s gold kylix than to shed light on it. Before posing these questions, let us sum-

Fig. 36. Sealing from the Eastern Temple Repository at the Palace of Knossos (after: CMS II8, 236).
Fig. 37. Sealing from the Archives Deposit at the Palace of Knossos (after: CMS II8, 248).
Fig. 38. Golden strip with ivy leaves from the Chamber Tomb 515 on the Kalkani hill, Mycenae. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 2797 (photo: NAM).
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Mary, all the evidence as to its identity: apparently unique from a typological point of view, yet it presents several similarities in its individual morphological elements and style with ceramic and metallic examples of the LHII-III A1 period. The technique of its manufacture is consistent in many respects with the data which has been collected on metalwork of the Late Bronze Age. On the other hand it has some technical peculiarities, which certainly are only found as exceptions in precious metal objects, but which are not otherwise unheard of. Of course, the fact that it was made up of four parts, and the way in which the rivets on the rim are attached distinguish it somewhat from other objects in this category. Nevertheless, where it differs significantly from the Aegean gold objects of the second millennium BC is in the analysis of the metal of its base material. Made from pure gold, of an unprecedented purity of 98.8% with tiny levels of silver and copper, at first glance it would seem to be a fake. Such a decision would, needless to say, be based on the present state of our knowledge; because there is neither a large database with analyses of all the Aegean gold, nor is it altogether improbable that such a high gold content could be found in native gold. From an iconographic point of view, its decoration with the three hunting dogs running one behind the other, automatically bringing to mind the idea of the hunt, is by no means inappropriate, at least according to the data collected about representations of dogs, though it should be noted that this data has not been thoroughly studied. As regards the decoration on the handle it certainly finds an important parallel in an MH/LHI gold vessel from the Tomb at Peristeria. From a stylistic point of view it deviates from the usual manner of depicting the ears in two of the three hounds, and as regards the fact that the motif on the handle does not cover the whole surface as was the norm, but just the central part. Assumptions about its authenticity therefore come up against some technical and stylistic peculiarities, but mainly the results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the base material, according once again to the current state of our knowledge.

On the other hand, if we suppose that it is a fake, we must then ask why a counterfeiter, who must have been operating up to the end of the 1930s (given the date of its acquisition) would have depicted hunting hounds on a gold vessel – in other words would have depicted a decorative motif, which at that time was of minor importance and in any case unsuitable to embellish a gold cup, an object of prestige and social status. He would, of course, have known the goblet from Mycenae with the lions at a flying gallop pose, and those from the Mycenae Acropolis Treasure with the handles ending in dogs’ heads cast in the round, which were on display at the National Technical University from 1880 and from 1892 at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.126 And naturally he would have been aware of the silver kylix from Midea with the scene of hounds hunting goats or the relevant wall-paintings from Tiryns. However, there was nothing that would have alerted him to the important position of the dog in the iconography of the hunt and the possibility of its emblematic use. Thus it is only reasonable to ask why he did not depict lions or griffins, creatures with a pre-eminent position in the Creto-Mycenaean iconographic repertoire and moreover known to have been depicted alone in a flying gallop pose on other objects. According to the rules of common sense the object would then have been more saleable. Should we assume that the maker of the gold cup brilliantly combined iconographic evidence with an intuitive understanding of it and
foreknowledge of the results of research from just under half a century later? Or that the choice of motifs was purely fortuitous? Because, of course, he would not have been in a position to know that the motif he chose to depict on the handle, would appear many years later decorating the handles of a gold vessel coming from an official excavation. If the Benaki Museum gold kylix really is a fake, could it have been copying some genuine Mycenaean work which has never been made known?

There is no doubt that we are left with an enigma, which must perhaps remain a question for the future. But, as is often the case with mysteries, they are not just something to be solved, but stimulate thought, spark the imagination and exalt the powers of reasoning.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Aruz 2008: J. Aruz, Marks of Distinction. Seals and Cultural Exchange between the Aegean and the Orient (ca. 2600-1360 BC), CMS Bh. 7 (Mainz a. R. 2008).
Notes

My warmest thanks go to Prof. A. Delivorrias, Director of the Benaki Museum for his constant encouragement and his courageous support; to Dr Nikos Kaltzas, Director of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens for giving me permission to study the gold vessels inv. nos 427, 656, 957, 959 and 8743; to Dr Lena Papazoglou, Curator of the Museum’s Prehistoric Collection for facilitated so many aspects of my work, providing the swiftest of responses to my enquiries; and to Maria Kondaki, conservator, for her kind collaboration. My arguments were sharpened thanks to discussions with Dr Christos Boulotis, archaeologist in the Academy of Athens; Dr Andreas Vlachopoulos, Assistant Professor at the University of Ioannina; Dr Katie Demakopoulou, Honorary Director of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens; Kiki Birtacha and Angeliki Ziva. The discussion of the iconographic motif of the hounds owes a great deal to the observations of Prof. François Poplin from the National Museum of Natural History in Paris and to Dr Katerina Trandaliou from the Ephorate for Palaeoanthropology and Speleology; while my conversations with Despoina Kotzamani, Head of the Department of Metal Conservation in the Benaki Museum and the goldsmith Drakos Daphnomilis were extremely valuable as regards technical matters. I am grateful to Dr Giorgos Rethemiotakis from the 21st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and to Dr Angeliki Lembessi for their various suggestions. My warmest thanks to Eleni Morati, Head of the Photographic Archive of the National Archaeological Museum in Athens for generously supplying me with photographic material and to the photographer Irini Miari from the same department (for figs 14-15, 21, 26-29, 32-33, 38-39); to Dr Natasha Massar, Acting Curator, Greek Section, Department of Antiquities of the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels (fig. 13); and finally to Prof. George Korres for permission to reproduce the drawings of the vase from Peristera electronically (fig. 40). The photographs of the kylix (figs 1-10) are by Manolis Mathios while the drawings of the cup and the sketch of its decoration were the work of artist Katerina Mavragani of the 21st Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (figs 11, 16). I am grateful to Valerie Nunn for the translation into English of this article.

However, I must admit that this article would not have found its way to the printers if it had not been for the limitless patience of Maria Diamandi, assistant editor of the Benaki journal; and above all the moral support so freely given by my life-long companion Dimitris Tragakis.

However, all errors and omissions are entirely my own.

**K. Dimoula, I was content not to know, The Little of the World.


5. See, for example, the case of the Minoan seal stone from Kydonia district, now in the Benaki Museum: E. Georgoula (ed.), Greek Jewellery from the Benaki Museum Collections (Athens 1999) 73-75 no. 14 (Chr. Boulotis); the ring of Minos: see recently N. Dimopoulou – G. Rethemiotakis, Το δαχτυλίδι του Μίνωα και τα μινωικά χρυσά δαχτυλίδια. Ο κύκλος της διαφοράς (Athens 2004) with collected bibliography; the so-called ring of Nestor: J.A. Sakellarakis, Über die Echtheit des sogenannten Nestorringes, J.A. Sakellarakis, Vergleichende Studien der archäologischen Funde vom Herbst 1938 bis Frühjahr 1939, AA 1939, 225, 231 fig. 4; H.-G. Buchholz – G. Jöhrens – I. Maull, Jagd und Fischfang, Arch. Hom., 1973, J67 no. A3; Laffineur 1977, 24, 27, 63, 69, 122 no. 114, fig. 44, where it is referred to by the wrong accession number (1160); A. Delivorrias, Οδηγός του Μουσείου Μπενάκη (Athens 1980) 20, 23 fig. 7; A. Delivorrias – D. Fotopoulos, Greece at the Benaki Museum (Athens 1997) 62-63 fig. 74.

6. See also Sakellarakis (n. 5) 303-06; I. Pini, Zum “Ring des Minos”, in: Eilandyn. Τόμος Τιμητικά για τον Αρχαιολόγο Νικόλαο Πλάτανα (Herakleion 1987) 441: “Einmal geäusserte Zweifel, ob begründet oder unbegründet, bedeuten einen Makel, der sich kaum jemals wieder ganz beseitigen lässt”.

7. On the Thebes ‘Jewellery Ensemble’ of the LHIIIB-IIIA1 period, see: Georgoula (n. 5) 36-69 nos 1-12 (Chr. Boulotis); the ring of Minos: see T. Moutsopoulos (ed.), Greek Jewellery from the Benaki Museum Collections (Athens 2004) figs on 10-12, 166-67, 183, 214-16. See also Eu. Soulougiannis, Αντώνης Εμμ. Μπενάκης, 1873-1954. Ο ενπατριώτης, ο διανοούμενος, ο ανθρωπιστής (Athens 2004) 137 fig.

9. No documents were found in the Benaki Museum’s
archives of purchases relating to the acquisition of this object. Moreover the name of the seller is not registered in the records of the Hellenic Association of Antiquarians and Art Dealers.

10. Nevertheless in bibliographical references there is nearly always some indication of provenance: The fact that it was acquired in the same year as the Thebes 'Jewellery Ensemble' and the continuous recording of newly acquired objects by Lemerle (n. 2) probably led Brommer (n. 2) to illustrate it a year later, noting it as coming from a tomb in Thebes. Based on existing information Buchholz – Jöhrens – Maull (n. 2) refer briefly to it as having been found in a Mycenaean tomb in Thebes. Laffineur 1977, 171 n. 12, too, although he lists it among the vessels of unknown origin, accepts Thebes as a possible provenance. Delivorrias (n. 2) makes no mention of the work’s provenance, while in Delivorrias – Fotopoulos (n. 2) Dendra in the Argolid is as a likely provenance, a suggestion which moreover has accompanied it in the show-case in which it has been displayed. See also Papageorgiou 2005 (n. 1) and Papageorgiou 2007 (n. 1) for a reference to Dendra in the Argolid as the provenance of this object.


12. Unfortunately a search in the Museum’s archives did not yield any results. No document written by Chatzidakis to Hartmann was found.


15. H. 9.2 cm (9.5 cm with the handle), diam. of lip 9.2 cm, diam. of base 4.4 cm, Weight: 111.5 gr.


18. Davis 1977, 273 no. 113 figs 222-223.

19. See, for example, Davis 1977, 165-68 no. 52 fig. 132 (the shape of the handle is clear in Karo 1930, pl. CXXVI), 173-74 no. 57 fig. 142; 199-200 no. 76 fig. 163; 204-08 no. 82 fig. 169-71 (the shape of the handle is clear in Karo 1930, pl. CXI), 267-69 no. 110 figs 214-216, 288-91 no. 122 fig. 234.

20. Furumark 1972, 620 no. 211 pl. 122; Mountjoy 1986, 32 fig 31.4; P.A. Mountjoy, Regional Mycenaean Decorated Pottery (Rahden/Westfalen 1999) 1: 256-58 no. 29 fig. 84.20.

21. Furumark 1972, 627-28 no. 254; Mountjoy 1986, 48-49 fig. 54.2.


27. Also see D.E. Strong, Greek and Roman Gold and Silver Plate (London 1966) 9, 25-26, 42; Davis 1977, 223 n. 522, 344-45; Matthäus 1980, 328, 329, 332.


29. Strong (n. 27) 42; Davis 1977, 329-30; Laffineur 1977, 73-75.


31. See Davis 1977, 344-45; Laffineur 1977, 75.

32. A. Sakellariou, Un cratère d’argent avec scène de bataille provenant de la IVe tombe de l’Acropole de Mycènes, Atti e memorie del 1° Congresso Internazionale di Micenologia, Roma 27 settembre - 3 ottobre 1967 (Roma 1968) 1, 263; Sakellariou (n. 32) 10-11. By contrast Davis 1977, 222-27 no. 86 figs 176-178, esp. 223 n. 522, disagrees with her, as she does not detect traces of solder. But Sakellariou herself (n. 32) notes that the traces of solder had become almost invisible both as a result of polishing and because the surface of the vessel had been covered with a layer of niello, the residue of which no doubt accounts for the absence of colour difference in the area where the two pieces are joined.

33. See A. Sakellariou, Un cratère d’argent avec scène de bataille provenant de la IVème tombe de Mycènes, Atti e memorie del 1° Congresso Internazionale di Micenologia, Roma 27 settembre - 3 ottobre 1967 (Roma 1968) 1, 263; Sakellariou (n. 32) 10-11. By contrast Davis 1977, 222-27 no. 86 figs 176-178, esp. 223 n. 522, disagrees with her, as she does not detect traces of solder. But Sakellariou herself (n. 32) notes that the traces of solder had become almost invisible both as a result of polishing and because the surface of the vessel had been covered with a layer of niello, the residue of which no doubt accounts for the absence of colour difference in the area where the two pieces are joined.

34. Davis 1977, 269-71 no. 111 figs 217-220.

35. Sakellariou (n. 32). According, however, to Davis 1977, 190-91 no. 65 fig. 153, this vessel was made from one sheet.


37. See Davis 1977, 146. According to Davis, in artefacts of Minoan manufacture three rivets are usually used to attach the handle to the lip.

38. Davis 1977, 295.

39. Davis 1977, 294-95 no. 127 figs 237-238.

40. See above, n. 17.

41. Davis 1977, 339-40; also 116-17 no. 22; 117 no. 23; 288-89 no. 122; 291-94 nos 123-26; 294-95 no. 127.

42. Davis 1977, 173-74 no. 57 fig. 142.

43. Davis 1977, 126-27, 328.

44. A silver cup from Tomb Iota in Grave Circle B (Davis 1977, 133-34 no. 28 fig. 104), a gold, banded handle from Tomb V of Grave Circle A (ibid., 168 no. 53 fig. 133) and a gold kantharos from Kalamata (ibid., 305-07 no. 134 figs 248-249).

45. For the precious metal objects see Davis 1977, 235-37 no. 89 fig. 185; Laffineur 1996, 99. On the bronze vessels see Matthäus 1980, 333-34.

46. For details of the repoussé technique see D. Vassilikou, Ο μυκηναϊκός πολιτισμός (Athens 1995) 43.

47. According to Laffineur 1996, 96-99, all the Mycenaean metalwork objects in repoussé were made using a carved stone mould.

48. L. animal A (from left to right): 6.4 cm; L. animal B: 6.3 cm; L. animal C: 6.3 cm.

49. Distance between A and B: 1.2 cm; B and C: 1.2 cm; distance of A and C from handle: 1.4 cm.

50. See, for example, the gold goblets from Tomb Gamma of Grave Circle B (Davis 1977, 130-33 no. 27 figs 102-103) and from Tomb IV of Grave Circle A, ibid., no. 50.


52. Davis 1977, 295-96 no. 128 figs 239-240; Laffineur 1977, 111 no. 76.

53. Persson (n. 24) 74-75 no. 19 fig. 88 pl. IV.1-2; Davis 1977, 267-69 no. 110 figs 214-216; Laffineur 1977, 114 no. 87 fig. 39. It is only Davis who mentions the one incision on the inside of the vessel.


55. G. Kopcke, Neue Holzfunde aus dem Heraion von Samos, AM 82 (1967) 102, 119-20 no. 9 fig. 6 pl. 61.1-2; 120-22 nos 10-13 pls 61.3-4, 62, 63.4-6; 130-31 no. 22 pls 70.2, 71; 138-39 no. 29 fig. 19 pl. 77.3-6; 143 no. 36 pl. 81.4; H. Kyrieleis, Archaische Holzfunde aus Samos, AM 95 (1980) 106-07 cat. no. 18 pl. 27.2; idem., The Relations between Samos and the Eastern Mediterranean. Some Aspects, in: V. Karageorghis (ed.), The Civilizations of the Aegean and their Diffusion in Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean, 2000-600 B.C. Proceedings of an International Symposium, 18-24 September 1989 (Larnaca 1991) 131 pl. 30.2; Simpson 1999, 781-82.


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61. And see Karydas – Zarkadas (n. 59) 101.


64. There are two rings from Sousa and part of the decoration from a Mycenaean sword from the Argolid: Hartmann 1982, 35, 150-51 pl. 36.

65. Ogden (n. 63) 22.

66. On this issue see recently Zavadil (n. 24) 112-13 nn. 95-98 with collected bibliography.

67. Lemerle (n. 2); Brommer (n. 2); Bucholz – Jöhrens – Maull (n. 2).

75. In the wall-painting from the LHIIIIB period with the wild boar hunt from the palace building: G. Rodenwaldt, *Tiryns II. Die Fresken des Palastes* (Athens 1912) 127-31 nos 177-83 fig. 55 pls XL3, XIII; Buchholz – Karageorghis 1971, 81 no. 1060; Morris 1990, 150 fig. 2a; Chr. Boulotis, *Aigaiakς Αρχαιολογική Λογία και Τέχνες. Ένας πολύχρωμος αφηγηματικός λόγος, Αρχαιολογική Λογία & Τέχνες* 55 (June 1995) fig. 29.

76. In the scene with the same subject matter and dating range as the Tiryns wall-painting: Th. Spyropoulos, *Ως ένας οικτόρος του Μινόου εις τον βοιωτικόν Ορχομενόν, ΑΑΑ* 1974, 320-21 fig. 8; Morris 1990, 151 fig. 4; Boulotis (n. 75) 20.


78. CMSVI.1B, 190.

79. See above, n. 71. The drawing in fig. 27 is the one which is regularly reproduced, whereas the one in fig. 28 (which comes from the photo-archives of the Athens National Archaeological Museum), has not been published before. The reason why I have chosen to illustrate both reconstructions is that comparing the two drawings with the original scene showed that the drawing in fig. 27 faithfully represents the body, but not the head of the dog, which is correctly depicted in the drawing in fig. 28.
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4. See Laffineur 1977, 63 n. 137 with collected examples.


For the first appearance of dogs in EHII pottery see J.L. Caskey, *Chalandriani in Syros*, in: L.F. Sandler (ed.), *Essays in memory of Karl Lehmann* (New York 1964) 65 n. 13. For their depiction as a main motif on LHIIIB-C Pictorial Style vases, see n. 92. See also Vermeule – Karageorghis 1982, 214 no. IX.82; Sakellarakis 1992, 45 no. 54.

96. On Early Minoan and Early Cycladic seals, whether chased or modelled: *CMS I*, 415c, 417c, 419c, 420a; *VIII*, 3b, 5c, 9, 19a, 20b, 31a-b; *VII*, 5b, 6, 17c, 206, 207; *II.1*, 77, 209, 213, 418, 422, 427c; *IX*, 1a, 3b, 5c, 14c; *II.2.*, 78c; *XII.*, 14c, 28c, 31a, 41a, 42c, 44b, 45b, 48c; *XIII.*, 79b, 140a; *VS.*, 1A, 225; *VI.*, 2, 487; *VI.* 45c, 49c, 54b, 61b. See also Yule 1980, 129-30.

On Middle Minoan seals and sealings: *CMS VII*, 216b; *II.*, 299, 300; *IX.*, 16a, 26a; *XII.*, 61a, 62b, 64b, 65a, 66b; *II.*, 113c, 139a, 173; *II.*, 37 (Hieroglyphic Sign), 38 (Hieroglyphic Sign), 75 (Hieroglyphic Sign); *VS.*, 3, 16b; *III.*, 152c, 157b, 162b, 163b, 166b, 174a, 175c, 177b, 179a, 180a, 184a, 197a, 199a, 207a, 211a; *VI.*, 25c, 42a, 91a (Hieroglyphic Sign), 97b, 127 (Hieroglyphic Sign), 104a (Hieroglyphic Sign).

On Late Minoan and Late Helladic seals and sealings: *CMS I*, 255, 256 (= Younger 1988, 48); *VIII.*, 115 (= Younger 1988, 192); *VII.*, 64 (= Younger 1988, 5); *IV.*, 185 (= Younger 1988, 48), 286, 289; *XII.*, 135a (= Younger 1988, 48); *II.*, 677a (= Younger 1988, 48 fig. 12); *VS.*, 1A, 77, 160; *VS.*, 1A, 452; *VS.*, 2, 99; *II.*, 64, *II.*, 6, 75-80, 92; *II.*, 8, 287, 326; *VS.*, 3, 21, 155, 393, 396; *III.*, 506, 507c; *VI.*, 357, 396, 397, 398. See also the gold seal from the Tomb in Poros, Herakleion, with a depiction of a dog in front of a private house: N. Dimopoulos, A gold signet disc from Poros, Herakleion: the guard dog and the garden, in: *Essays in honor of Peter Warren* (under press). I am most grateful to Dr Angeliki Lembessi, who brought this very recent find to my attention.


They appear arranged heraldically on two pairs of gold earrings of the Middle Bronze Age from the Aegina Treasure: R.
They are depicted in the same way on a gold pendant from a plundered tomb of the early 13th Dynasty (ca. 1780-1740 BC) in Avaris, Egypt (Tell el-Dab’a): G. Walberg, A Gold Pendant from Tell el-Dab’a, ÄAEL 2 (1991) 111-14; Bietak in Davies – Schofield (n. 74) 19-20 pl. 14.1; J. Aruz, Appendix: the Gold Pendant from Tell el-Dab’a, in: Bietak (n. 74), 44-46 fig. 39; H. Siebenmorgen (ed.), Im Labyrinth des Minos: Kreta-die erste europäische Hochkultur (exhibition catalogue, Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum, München 2000) 319 no. 307 (M. Bietak); Aruz 2008, 109-10 fig. 246; R. Schiestl, Three pendants: Tell el-Dab’a, Aigna and a new silver pendant from the Petrie Museum, in: Fitton 2009, 53-56 figs 190-191.

Seated on a stepped base it crowns a Minoan bronze pin from Palaikastro: M. Effinger, Minoischer Schmuck (Oxford 1996) 57, 274 Pa 4a, pl. 13p (chance find).

Depicted in semi-recumbent pose they decorate seven cut-out gold sheets from Tomb III in Grave Circle A: Karo 1930, 50 nos 41-42 pl. XXVI.

98. In addition to the object mentioned in n. 72 (the Menidi plaque), the subject also appears on a small LHI period wooden pyxis from Tomb V of Grave Circle A, on both sides of which are depicted two pairs of carved dogs on stepped, ivory bases which are perhaps meant to suggest the roofs of houses: B. Schweitzer, Hunde auf dem Dach, AM 55 (1930) 107-18; Poursat 1977a, 62 no. 215/812 pl. 18 (with collected bibliography); Aruz 2008, 146. In any case the work is thought to be Minoan, influenced by Egyptian models.

99. In a frieze from Hall 64 of the palace at Pylos about twenty hunting hounds are depicted sitting one next to the other. The frieze runs parallel with a second frieze with battle scenes: M. Lang, The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia. II. The Frescoes (Princeton 1969) 119-22 nos 38-41 pls 62-67; 137 col. pls G, P.

100. For the possible presence of a dog in a hunting scene on a marble plaque of the ECII-III period, found at Korí t’Aroniou, Naxos, see Chr. Doumas, Κοριτ' τ’Αρονιού. Μυριά ανασκαφική έρευνα εν Νάξω, AD 20 (1965), Μιλέτο 50-52 no. III drawing 5 pl. 36β. In the EMII-III period scenes reminiscent of the hunt and including hounds are depicted on two seals: CMSVIII, 12; II.1, 469.

On Middle Minoan seals and sealings, see CMS II.2, 87a; II.8, 353. On the appearance of hunting scenes with hounds in MMII seal carving, see Pini 1985, 154.

In the seal carving of the Late Bronze Age the subject is certainly found more often: see above n. 70. And see also CMSI, 81 (= Younger 1988, 116 fig. 84), 165 (= Younger 1988, 159-60); VII, 96 (= Younger 1988, 111-12 fig. 76), 160 (= Younger 1988, 105), 175 (= Younger 1988, 115); II.5, 284; IX, 145 (= Pini 1985, 162; Younger 1988, 117 fig. 85), 195 (= Pini 1985, 161; Younger 1988, 105 fig. 67); XIII, 71; V, 656 (= Younger 1988, 162 fig. 116); X, 130 (= Younger 1988, 115); I Suppl., 109; II.3, 33; XI, 33; VS. 1A, 174; II.7, 99, 168; VS. 1B, 74, 276a, 341, 352, 356; II.6, 96; II.8, 353, 354, 366 (= Pini 1985, 160 fig. 17, 162); VS. 3, 153 (= L. Marangou [ed.], Μινωικά και ελληνικά πολιτισμών από την συλλογή Μητσοτάκη [Athens 1992] 219 no. 293 [I. Pini]), 400; III, 414, 415; VI, 180, 375, 377, 378, 384, 399-402.

For the presence of hounds in hunting scenes on pottery see above nn. 77, 92. Cf. also Vermeule – Karageorghis 1982, 138, 223 no. XI70; Sakellarakis 1992, 24-25 no. 10. See also the depicted scene on a LHIIIIB jug’s fragment from Phylakopi, Melos: C. Renfrew (ed.), The Archaeology of Cult: The Sanctuary at Phylakopi (London 1985) 205 no. 508; Goodison (n. 97) 425 fig. 39b.

For the depiction of hunting dogs on Mycenaean metalwork see above n. 71.

In ivories scenes of dogs hunting wild animals appear on a LHIIIB-period plaque from the palace at Thebes: see above n. 72 and on a LHIIIC plaque from a tomb in Spata: Poursat 1977a, 160 no. 463/2048 pl. XLIX; Poursat 1977b, 87-88 no. 2. And see the LCII plate from Kition: V. Karageorghis, Excavations at Kition. I. The Tombs (Nicosia 1974) 61 fig. 1; Poursat 1977b, 87-88 no. 3 pl. XV-3-4.

On the appearance of the subject in wall-paintings see above notes 73-76. See also the hunting scene which once decorated a room above Hall 46 in the Palace of Pylos with men accompanied by dogs: Lang (n. 99) 40, 107-08 nos 12-14; 205-07 pls 50, 51, 133 col. pl. M.

101. This motif is found exclusively on seals: CMS II.3, 52 (= Younger 1988, 149); VS. 1A, 119; VS. 1B, 58; X, 161 (= Younger 1988, 150); II.8, 236, 248, 251. In an attempt to analyse the iconographic code used in Aegean seal carving to depict divinities, Crowley connects some of the above-mentioned scenes with the existence of a Hound Lord and a Hound Lady in the Creto-Mycenaean pantheon, in other words with the depiction of a Hunter-Warrior God hunting with his hound: J.L. Crowley, In honour of the Gods – but which Gods? Identifying deities in Aegean Glyptik, in: Hitchcock – Laffineur – Crowley (n. 73) 75-87 pls XII.27, 32, XIV.57, 58. However, it is very likely that this subject could be depicted as pars pro toto of a larger hunting scene, not necessarily connected with a divinity.

102. CMSI, 161 (= Younger 1988, 93); VII, 126 (= Younger 1988, 89).

103. A few figurines of dogs appear among the Middle Minoan zoomorphic offerings at the peak sanctuary in
The Mycenaean golden kylix of the Benaki Museum: A dubitandum?


On the presence of the dog in Minoan bronzes, see: A. Pilati-Papasteriou, *Die bronzenen Tierfiguren aus Kreta*, PBF1,3 (1985) 92-93 no. 231.


104. There are three rhytons in all: one which may have come from Tiryns, now in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford: M.I. Maximova, *Les vases plastiques dans l’Antiquité* (Paris 1927) 76-77 fig 7; C. Doumas, A Mycenaean Rhyton from Naxos, *AA* 83 (1968) 384-85 fig 19; Buchholz – Karageorghis 1971, 102-03 no. 1240; Guggisberg 1996, 234 n. 1053 with collected bibliography.


105. *CMS* II.8, 326.


107. For lions see *CMS* I, 46; XI, 47, 176; II.7, 73. This subject finds monumental expression in the sculpture which crowns the Lion Gate at Mycenae, this time with the addition of a column, as *pars pro toto* of the royal house, between the two lions: G.E. Mylonas, *Ancient Mycenae. The Capital City of Agamemnon* (London 1957) 25-26; idem, *Mycena and the Mycenaean Age* (Princeton 1966) 174-75; C. Boulouris, Villes et palais dans l’art égéen du Il e millénaire av. J.-C., in: P. Darque – R. Treuil (eds), *L’habitat égéen préhistorique. Actes de la Table Ronde Internationale organisée par le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, L’Université de Paris I et l’École Française d’Athènes* (Athènes, 23-25 juin 1987) BCH Suppl. XIX (1990) 454-57 fig. 18. For griffins see *CMS* I, 73, 98. For apes: *CMS* II.6, 74. See also Papageorgiou – Birtacha (n. 68) 295-97 fig. 8y; 297 n. 45 with further bibliography.


111. On a cylinder seal of the LM/LHII period from the Erlenmeyer Collection (Younger 1995, 185-86 no. 222), on a seal of the LMIII A1 period from Poros (*CMS* II.3, 193; Younger 1995, 186 no. 228 pl. LXxg) and on an undated seal from Knossos (*CMS* II.8, 248; Younger 1995, 186 no. 229 pl. LXxh).


116. On this subject, see Morris 1990, 155; Hamilakis 1996, 163-64.


120. See Furumark 1972, 268-274 fig. 36.30-37; Niemeier, (n. 119) 72-73 fig. 23.7.


122. See some examples from the chamber tombs at Mycenae of the LHIII-B period: A. Xenaki-Sakellariou, *Oι δαλαματοι ταφων των Μυκηναϊκων ανασκαφης Χρ. Τσούντα* (1887-1898) (Paris 1985) 215 no. Χ 2933 (1) pl. 98,II (gold strip); 277 no. Γ 5413 (4-5) pl. 136; 198 no. Γ 2929 (4) pl. 88 (glass plaques); 305 no. 100. See also A.J.B. Wace, *Chamber Tombs at Mycenae* (Oxford 1932) 62-63 no. 80a pl. 32. The same motif is found moreover on some glass or gold beads: Person (n. 71) pl. 18; Wace, *op. cit.*, 26-27 fig. 12.42, 221; Xenaki-Sakellariou, *op. cit.*, 64 no. Γ 2395 (11) pls 5-6; 246 no. X 3153 (7) pl. 117; 257 no. X 3186 pl. 125; 288 no. X 4932 (6) pl. 143; 305 no. 100.


124. See Davis 1977, 157-59 no. 46 fig. 124; 260-63 no. 107 figs 206-207; 271-73 no. 112 fig. 221; 296-97 no. 129 figs 241-242; 300-02 no. 131 fig. 244; 311-12 no. 137 fig. 252; 324-25 no. 147 figs 263-264; 325-26 no. 148 fig. 265. Exactly the same thing is found on bronze vessels: Matthäus 1980, pls 17.153, 18.154, 21.188, 33.281-82, 34.285-87, 39.324-26, 40.327-29, 331, 42.351.

125. S. Marinatos, Περί των νέων βασιλικούς τάφους των Μυκηνών, in: *Γέρας Αντωνίου Κεραμοποιόλων* (Athens 1953) 72-75 fig. 2; Mylonas 1957 (n. 107) 135-37 fig. 45; Hood 1978, 98; N. Marinatos, Celebrations of Death and the Symbolism of the Lion Hunt, in: Hägg – Nordquist 1990, 144-45 fig. 3; Otto 1996, 816-17 fig. 3. See also the depiction of an ivy leaf on a fragment of another stele from Grave Circle A, on which no other decoration survives – though in accordance with the iconography on the others, it is thought this stele too would have had a scene related to war or hunting; E. Protonotariou-Deilaki, *Burial Customs and Funerary Rites in the Prehistoric Argolid*, in: Hägg – Nordquist 1990, 81 fig. 27; Otto 1996, 816-17 fig. 2.


ΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΠΑΠΑΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ

Η χρυσή μυκηναϊκή κύλικα του Μουσείου Μπενάκη: Ένα κιβώτιο τέχνης;

Η χρυσή κύλικα με αρ. ευρ. 2108 αποκτήθηκε από το Μουσείο Μπενάκη το 1939 και χρονολογούμενη στους μυκηναϊκούς χρόνους, αποτελεί μαζί με τα κοσμήματα του «Θησείου της Θήβας» τον πυρήνα της προϊστορικής σύλλογης του Μουσείου. Προφέροντας από αγορά, αρα εξ ορισμού υπότητη, δεν κίνησε παρά ελάχιστα το ενδιαφέρον του επιστημονικού κοινού σε τέτοιο μάλλον σημείο ώστε να λησθεί, αν και ιδιότυπη, ή μάλλον έξαιρετικά. Υποφέρει για την ανθετικότητά της έχουν πάντως διαπιστώθηκε, αλλά μόνον αναπαυσιός. Η κύλικα έχει κατασκευαστεί από τέσσερα φύλλα χρυσού ενομένα μεταξύ τους με κόλληση, εκτός από το έλαιο της λαβής, το οποίο έχει στερεωθεί με καρφιά. Από τυπολογική άποψη, παρουσιάζει στις επιμέρους μορφολογικά της στοιχεία αρκετές συνάφειες με χρυσά μυκηναϊκά αγγεία, καθώς και με κεραμικά δείγματα της ΥΕΙΙΙΑ Περιόδου. Ως προς την τεχνική της κατασκευής της, είναι συμβατή σε πολλά με όσα δεδομένα έχουν συλλέγει για τη μεταλλοτεχνία της Ύστερης Εποχής του Χαλκού. Τη χαρακτηρίζουν, ωστόσο, κάποιες τεχνικές ιδιαίτερες που οπανούν ανάμεσα στα αγγεία από πολλά μεταλλα· δεν είναι όμως αναπαρασιτάρικες. Εξαίρετη συνηθισμένη τόσο ο τρόπος με τον οποίο έχει προσηλθεί η λαβή στο χείλος, όσο και η κατασκευή της από τέσσερα ελάχιστα. Επιπλέον, σε
σημαντικό βαθμό από τα χρυσά αγγελικά σκεύη της 2ης χιλιετίας π.Χ. αποκλείνει ως προς την ανάλυση του μετά-
λου κατασκευής της. Πρόκειται για καθαρό χρυσό, στην
πρωτοφανή αναλογία του 98,8% με ελάχιστα ποσοστά
αργήρου και χάλκου, ο οποίος έπειτα είναι σε σχέση με
εξαίρετη αυτορριψία χρυσού, είναι ανήκει στην κατηγορία
του Εξαρθρωμένου. Εάν ισχύει η δεύτερη υπόθεση, η κύ-
λικα συγκαταλέγεται μάλλον στην κιβδήλα, δεδομένου
ότι ο εξαρθρωμένος του χρυσού φαίνεται πως λαμβάνει
χώρα μετά την εμφάνιση της νομισματοκοπίας. Σε κάθε
περίπτωση θα πρέπει, πάντως, να υπογραμμιστεί ότι δεν
dιαθέτουμε πλούσια βάση δεδομένων με αναλύσεις επί
του συνόλου των αγγελικών χρυσών.

Η κύλικα κοσμείται στο σώμα με έκτυπη παράσταση
τριών κυνηγητικών σκυλιών που αποδίδονται σε ιπτώμενο
καλλιεργό το ένα πίσω από το άλλο. Από άποψη ύφους,
ανύψωση με τη μυκηναϊκή εικονογραφία είναι η απόδο-
ση της κεφαλής και ιδιαίτερα των αυτιών. Από εικονο-
γραφικής άποψης, το διακοσμητικό της θέμα, αν και άπαξ
εμφανίζεται, συνάδει με όσες στοιχεία συνελέγησαν
γερό από την εικονογραφία του σκύλου στο Αγαλίο της
2ης χιλιετίας π.Χ., που, ας σημειωθεί, δεν έχει ενδελεχώς
μελετηθεί. Η απεικόνισή του ζώου μόνον του σε ποικίλες
μορφές τέχνης ήδη από την προανακτική περίοδο, η
εμφάνισή της, δηλαδή, με υπόσταση συμβολική, καθώς
εξαιρετικά πιθανή την κόσμηση μιας χρυσής κύλικας, αγ-
γείου προδήλα εντασσόμενου στα σύμβολα κύρους, με
tη συγκεκριμένη σκηνή, η οποία υποβάλει αυτώματα
την ιδέα του κυνηγήματος. Με τη συγκεκριμένη δράση που
αποτελείται ένα ιδεώδες μέσο προβολής δύναμης και
ειδικών δεξιοτήτων φαίνεται πως είχε συνδεθεί η μυκη-
ναϊκή άρχουσα τάξη. Ως προς την κόσμηση της λαβής
tης με σχηματοποιημένα φύλλα κιοσού σε αλυσιδώτη
διάταξη, βρίσκεται μάλιστα ένα σημαντικό παράλληλο στο
χρυσό ME/YEI αγγείο από τάφο της Περιστεριάς, ενώ
το συγκεκριμένο μοτίβο δεν είναι άγνωστο στη μικηναϊκή
και τη μυκηναϊκή κεραμική, τη μυκηναϊκή μικροτεχνία,
αλλά και την αγγελική τέχνη των τοιχογραφιών.

Η υπόθεση της αυθεντικότητάς της κύλικας προσκρού-
ει, συνεπώς, περισσότερο σε ζητήματα που αφορούν την
tεχνική της κατασκευής της και την ανάλυση του μετά-
λου και πολύ λιγότερο, αν όχι καθόλου, στην ιδιοτυπία
tου διακοσμήματος. Η υπόθεση της μη αυθεντικότητάς
tης εγέρει, βεβαίως, μια αλληλογραφία ερωτημάτων με
σημαντικότερα ανάμεσα στους το πώς ένας κιβδήλοποιός,
που θα πρέπει να είχε δράσει εκεί την τέλη της δεκαετίας
του 1930, θα γνώριζε τη συμβολική αξία που είναι η
αλληλογραφία ερωτημάτων με σημαντικότερα ανάμεσα στους
tο πώς ένας κιβδήλοποιός, που θα πρέπει να είχε δράσει εκεί
tην τέλη της δεκαετίας του 1930, θα γνώριζε τη
συμβολική αξία που είναι η
αλληλογραφία ερωτημάτων με σημαντικότερα ανάμεσα στους
το πώς ένας κιβδήλοποιός, που θα πρέπει να είχε δράσει εκεί
tην τέλη της δεκαετίας του 1930, θα γνώριζε τη
συμβολική αξία που είναι η