Prehistoric Archaeology has no methods apart from those of other sciences. To complement the generalities of handbooks it is necessary to study more specific subjects in monographs. Only in this way can we attack complex or simple subjects which when solved add most unexpected clue to the general aspect of the problems. From this basis I began the study of the Mycenaean stone vases on which I have been working for at least the last three years. They concern a subject with difficulties previously entirely unknown. Only sporadically are Mycenaean stone vases so far known, when they are published together with other kinds of objects without a specific study. As an example I refer to a recent book, the first on the subject of Minoan stone vases. The writer, Peter Warren, knows the existence of about 70 Mycenaean stone vases in the National Museum of Athens, although in that Museum alone there are more than three hundred. It seems obvious that material should not be despised when numbers speak so loud.

Stone vases are not of course a Mycenaean invention. Long before the appearance of the Mycenaens there are sporadic examples of stone vases on the Mainland. In the Museum of Volos there are some pieces from Thes-
saly and in the National Museum of Athens two simple vases, accidental finds from Sparta, as well as some fragments of stone vases from N. Makri, Attica, which are dated to the Neolithic period. To the same period are dated also some fragments from Corinth. It is clear that these are the first timid attempts of vase manufacture in a material harder than clay, attempts which are not isolated. About the same period we have certain more perfect specimens from the Neolithic site of Khirokitia in Cyprus, while in Egypt the working of stone for vases has already started.

That Egypt was the cradle of stone vases one can say certainly. From the predynastic period and more commonly from the period of the four first dynasties many stone vases were manufactured. There are mentioned thousands of stone vases buried with each of the 28 kings of the first four dynasties. It is calculated that in Egypt 10-20 thousands of stone vases in hard stones have been found in addition to the much more numerous vases in softer materials. We should not forget that stone vases are of a kind not readily destroyed. On the contrary they are used for hundreds of years. An Egyptian vase of diorite accompanied a burial at Archanes, Crete, dated about 1450 B.C., a thousand years after its manufacture. Perhaps it comes from the plundering, common in that period, of an Early Dynastic Egyptian tomb and was sold as an exotic object to an inhabitant of the Aegean. The example is instructive not only for the influence of the two civilizations upon each other but for the study of the stone vases which we are now examining. The influence of the Egyptian art of stone engraving upon the Aegean seems natural even if we look only at the bulk of the production. The numerous early Minoan

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3 D. Theocharis-J.A. Sakellarakis and others, Neolithic Greece, Athens 1973, fig. 239, 275-6.
4 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 3948, 3979; P. Wolters, AM 16, 1891, 52, fig. 4-5; D. Theocharis-J.A. Sakellarakis and others, op. cit. 209-10.
5 D. Theocharis, AM 71, 1956, 24f. fig. 45-6, pl. 16-7. In the National Museum of Athens there are seven more unpublished fragments of stone vases from Nea Makri, Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 10064.
6 L. Walker Kosmopoulos, The Prehistoric Inhabitation of Corinth, Munich 1948, 70, fig. 24f. 46.
7 P. Dikaios, Khirokitia, Oxford 1953, 232, 236, 237, 255, 257-9, 261, pl. XLII- XLVIII.
stone vases excavated in the tholos tombs of Messara in Crete \(^\text{11}\) and in the cemeteries of Mochlos \(^\text{12}\) can be discussed only in comparison with the corresponding Egyptian specimens. The Aegean however, and in this case Crete, shows already in the third millenium B.C., artistic avant-guard. While the Egyptian stone vases repeat invariably the same shapes the Minoan, as later the Mycenaean, are very often personal creations.

At the same period there is wide production of stone vases in the Cyclades, made, like the contemporary idols, exclusively from marble. Typical shapes are the “candila” \(^\text{13}\) so called from its similarity to the well known vessel used today in churches, and the two handled cylindrical vase \(^\text{14}\), both with thick handles, perforated so that the vessels could be suspended. In addition to those simple shapes which are used for the construction of big stone vases, there is a series of smaller vases from marble, in shapes which are very often imitations of the contemporary clay ones \(^\text{15}\). The production however of stone vases is not limited only to the Cyclades and Crete. Sporadic specimens are to be found in the islands and the mainland, as a marble vase from Lerna \(^\text{16}\), the vases from Poliochni in Lemnos \(^\text{17}\) and Agios Kosmas, Attica \(^\text{18}\), small engraved stone vases of chlorite with Minoan and with still stronger Cycladic influences. A small vase from Kythera, decorated with an engraved spiral shows the same influence and probably is to be dated to the same period \(^\text{19}\). Another find from Kythera, a little open cup of marble \(^\text{20}\) shows more definite foreign relations. It is certainly an imported Egyptian vase since it bears engraved hieroglyphics with the name of the temple of the sun of the founder of the 5th dynasty, Pharaoh Uzerkaf.

The roots of stone engraving in the Aegean are however in Crete. The summit of the Minoan civilization in the first half and in the middle of the
second millenium B.C., is a flourishing epoch for the construction of stone vases. One wonders at which vase to pause — at the marble rhyton in the form of a lioness’ head from the temple repositories in Knossos\textsuperscript{21} or at the engraved rhyton of steatite in the form of an ostrich-egg from Ag. Triada, the so called “harvesters vase”\textsuperscript{22}? While the broad surfaces of the first have been worked without details, the surface of the second seems to be elaborated with dense groups of men and their tools executed into a rather deep relief. It is not strange to find Minoan and the Minoanizing stone vessels in the Aegean Islands where Minoan colonies were founded, like the well known “sacred communion chalice” from Thera\textsuperscript{23}, as well as some new finds from Thera\textsuperscript{24}, the little jug from Kythera\textsuperscript{25}, some stone vases from Phylakopi, Melos\textsuperscript{26} and others from Kea\textsuperscript{27}. Crete which yielded the great find of numerous cult vases from the temple repositories of Zakros palace\textsuperscript{28} spreads abroad the art of stone vases. The artists who constructed the goldplated stone rhyton with the representation of a peak sanctuary with the running wild goats\textsuperscript{29} and the admirable rock crystal rhyton, both from Zakros\textsuperscript{30}, sent their works of art or their pupils to Mycenaean Greece whither the stone cutting art was transplanted.

This brief review of the history of the manufacture of stone vases is necessary for the understanding of the Mycenaean examples. The oldest stone vase from the Helladic Mainland, the superb vase from the second grave circle of Mycenae in the form of a duck turning its head back (Pl. I, 1)\textsuperscript{31}, should be examined together with the rhyton of Zakros not only because of the material which is the same in both works, but rather because of the inspiration and the perfection of the execution. As happens in other species of art so it is in the case of stone cutting. The first known works of Mycenaean art seem perfect but there is no previous history of stone working in that area.

\textsuperscript{21} S. Marinatos-M. Hirmer, Kreta, Thera und das mykenische Hellas, München 1973, Abb. 99.
\textsuperscript{22} Op. cit. 103-5.
\textsuperscript{23} Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 3964. C. Zervos, op. cit. fig. 9; E. Sapouna-Sakellarakis, op. cit. pl. 21.
\textsuperscript{24} S. Marinatos, Praktika 1968, fig. 118c; 1969, fig. 236a; 1970, fig. 295b; 1971, fig. 282-9.
\textsuperscript{25} Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 3946. N. Coldstream, op. cit. 265-6, pl. 86 1.
\textsuperscript{26} R.C. Bosanquet and others, Excavations at Phylakopi in Melos, London 1904, 196-199.
\textsuperscript{27} J. Caskey, Hesp. 41, 1972, pl. 95.
\textsuperscript{28} N. Platon, Zakros, New York 1971, 133ff.
1. Rock crystal vase from the second grave circle of Mycenae (Grave 0) in the form of a duck.

2. Alabaster vase from the first grave circle of Mycenae (Grave IV).
3. Alabaster vase from the first grave circle of Mycenae (Grave V).

4. Gold-plated alabaster vase from the first grave circle of Mycenae (Grave V).
5. Steatite vase from the "House of Shields" at Mycenae.

6. Stone vase from a chamber tomb at Mycenae.

7. Steatite vase from the Acropolis at Mycenae.
8. Egyptian diorite vase from chamber tomb Nr. 55 at Mycenae.

9. Fragment of an alabaster vase from Mycenae in the form of a monkey.

10. Egyptian diorite vase from Mycenae.

11. Alabaster vase from the tholos tomb at Vapheio.
12. Diorite vases from chamber tombs Nr. 76, 102 at Mycenae.

13. Stone vase from a chamber tomb at Mycenae.

14. Serpentine vase from chamber tomb Nr. 99 at Mycenae.

15. Serpentine vase from chamber tomb Nr. 58 at Mycenae.

17. Gypsum vase from chamber tomb Nr. 88 at Mycenae.
18. Gypsum vase from Mycenae.

19. Stone vase from the "House of Shields" at Mycenae.

20. Fragment of an amethyst vase from Mycenae.

22. Fragments of polychrome stalactite vases from Phylacopi, Melos.

24. Fragments of stone vases from a chamber tomb at Spata

25. Stone vases from the tholos tomb at Menidi.
26. Fragments of stone vases from the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae.

27. Fragments of stone vases from the Acropolis at Mycenae.

28. Fragment of an alabaster vase from chamber tomb Nr. 102 at Mycenae.

29. Stone vase from the "House of Shields" at Mycenae.
30. Fragment of an alabaster vase from chamber tomb Nr. 88 at Mycenae.

31. Serpentine relief vase from chamber tomb Nr. 26 at Mycenae.
32. Fragment of a steatite relief vase from the Acropolis at Athens.

33. Fragment of a stone vase in the form of a bull's head from Mycenae.

34. Alabaster vase from chamber tomb Nr. 102 at Mycenae.

35. Part of a multicoloured marble vase from chamber tomb at Nauplia.
36. Stone capital and shaft from Zakros, combined.

37. Stone shaft of a column from Zakros.
38. Alabaster lamp from the Lion Tomb at Mycenae.

39. Trachyte vase from Mycenae.

40. Stone lamp from chamber tomb Nr. 88 at Mycenae.

41. Stone capital from Mycenae.
The explanation seems self-evident. Only Minoan artists with a long tradition could recreate the old Egyptian subject of the duck which floats slowly, turning back its head, so that the tail is used as a spout and the head as a handle, creating a real work of art.

The same signs of maturity are preserved in the stone vases from the first burial circle of Mycenae, dated a little later. A vase of Cretan alabaster from the Shaft Grave IV (Pl. I, 2), looks Minoan. It is a masterpiece of elegance, a vase with a large base, spherical body and lip decorated with horizontal zones, with three S-shaped handles. The handles are worked out in separate pieces of stone and are joined to the body by pieces of wire. Especially worth mention is the harmonious and bold contour of the vase, which is emphasised by the various surfaces of the handles. The four-lobed lip has also a continuous wavy outline. This characteristic in combination with the wavy handles suggests that the vase imitates a metal prototype. A slightly later golden cup from a chamber tomb at Midea has a similar but eight-lobed, wavy lip which would certainly be more easily produced in metal than in stone. Two alabaster cups from the IVth and Vth Shaft Graves of Mycenae one of which is oxidized from contact with neighbouring bronze objects (Pl. II, 3), are again imported Minoan vases. They are two "sacred communion chalices", as they are called, known from the little fragments of the reconstructed Knossian fresco of the libation offerings. The well known figure of "La Parisienne", which is part of that composition, held in her hands a vase of this kind. Finally another alabaster vase, gold-plated this time, from the Vth shaft grave of Mycenae (Pl. II, 4), which also has been oxidized from neighbouring bronzes, has Minoan elements. It is an Egyptian alabastron transformed. The base of the Egyptian vase was cut and formed the lip of the Minoan one. The lip again of the Egyptian vase was shortened and into the central hole was put an inlay piece of alabaster to form the base of the Minoan. Here the gold covers only the lip and the two wooden handles. It seems from the hole at the shoulder that a spout

32 For the motif of the duck turning back its head in the Aegean see J.A. Sakellarakis, Arch. Ephem. 1971, 188-233, esp. 222ff.
33 Nat. Mus. Inv. 389; G. Karo, Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai, München 1930/33, 94, pl. CXXXVIII-CXXXIX.
35 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 600, 854; G. Karo, op. cit. 118, 148, pl. CXXXVIII-CXXXIX.
37 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 829; G. Karo, op. cit. 147, pl. CXXXVII.
was added, formed perhaps from stone or from another material, in a well
known Minoan technique.

We should not think that all the stone vases of Mycenaean Greece are
importations from Crete. As in other species of art the Mycenaeans gained
quickly in experience, accepting the foreign forms but harmonising and
adapting them to their aesthetic rules. Examples are a series of spherical
vases which could be considered as pure Mycenaean creations, as a vase of
steatite which was found in the “House of Shields” at Mycenae (PI. III, 5) 39.
The neck with the relief ring at its base was constructed from a separate
piece of stone like the lid. From another vase from a chamber tomb of My­
cenae (Pl. III, 6) 40 the added piece of neck is not preserved. The body of the
vase is here more slender, emphasized as it is by the engraved winding parallel
grooves. The movement of the grooves is astonishing and shows clearly
that the assumption that the Mycenaeans were the inventors of the metallic
compass 41 is more than a mere theory. Another vase of black steatite from
the Acropolis of Mycenae has three handles (Pl. III, 7) 42. In this example as in
those previously mentioned the added piece of neck, apparently attached by
wire for which holes were opened symmetrically between the handles, is
not preserved.

The distinction between the genuine Mycenaean vases and the imported,
is not always easy. As has been said before, stone vases survive for
many years and often change owners. The finding of a stone vase in
Mycenaean Greece does not prove that it is Mycenaean and the imports are
not limited to those from Crete alone. They come also from Egypt. A two
handled vase of diorite which comes from a chamber tomb at Mycenae
(Pl. IV, 8) 43 is an Egyptian imported vase, already made at the end of the third
millenium B.C. The identification is easy if we compare it with other
Egyptian vases 44. Imported as well is perhaps another type of alabaster vase
in the shape of a monkey of which we know fragments from Mycenae and
Tiryns. A piece from Tiryns 45 preserves the ear, the muzzle, and the once
inlaid eye of the animal. A fragment from Mycenae (Pl. IV, 9) 46 shows the foot
of the squatting animal. A small complete vase of this kind is known from

40 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2371.
41 P. Warren, op. cit. 158.
42 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2777.
43 Chamber Tomb 55; Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2919; V. Stais, Mycenaean Collection
of the National Museum, Athens 1926, 127; A. Evans, PM II, 31 n. 1; P. Warren,
op. cit. 114.
45 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 6250.
46 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2657.
Mycenaean Stone vases

Hagia Triada, Crete. A series of vases of veined alabaster in different sizes from Mycenae, Vapheio (Pl. IV, 11) and Nauplia, which have common characteristics — a relatively narrow base, an ovoid body, and a large mouth — are Egyptian imports. One should not forget that alabaster is a very common material for vases of the New Kingdom in Egypt. For the distinction of the stone vase workshops, we should therefore bear in mind not only shapes but materials as well. On this basis another vase from Mycenae (Pl. IV, 10) is Egyptian. Its shape is typical of the Old Kingdom, the IVth-Vth Dynasties. The vase is therefore the oldest imported Egyptian vase in Mycenaean Greece, but unfortunately we are ignorant of the exact place at Mycenae whence it comes. The material is again Egyptian diorite. But diorite exists also in Crete so that only a petrological examination could prove the provenance of the stone for the vases of diorite which come from the chamber tombs at Mycenae (Pl. V, 12). The shape, however, of the spherical vase with the two upraised handles and the bridge-spout is typical of MMlb-II, and very common in Crete in clay. The stone vases therefore could only be of Minoan importation, undoubtedly from some palatial workshop, if we judge from the astonishingly subtle work. Imported from Crete is also another vase from a chamber tomb at Mycenae (Pl. V, 14), a kind of kernos with five low contiguous cylinders and small handles for suspension, as well as a heart-shaped vase from serpentine (Pl. V, 15) which must be a ritual vessel.

As we have already seen, apart from shapes dictated by the material, some of the stone vases imitate metal prototypes. These examples are especially useful for the dating of the stone vases. The dating of stone vases is not an easy task, due to the general difficulty of their long

47 R. Paribeni, Mon. Ant. XIV, 1904, 727-8, fig. 25; P. Warren, op. cit. 104, pl. 587.
50 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 3523; V. Stais, Praktika 1892, 54; P. Warren, op. cit. 114.
51 P. Warren, op. cit. 112; Cf. also above n. 38.
52 A. Lucas-J.R. Harris, op. cit. 422, 427; Cf. the alabaster vases Inv. Nr. 4081, 4083, 6950 of the Egyptian Collection of the National Archaeological Museum at Athens.
53 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 9739.
54 P. Warren, op. cit. 110.
55 Chamber Tomb 76, 102; Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 3050, 4922; P. Warren, op. cit. 39.
56 S. Marinatos-M. Hirmer, op. cit. pl. VII.
usage. One should also consider the fact that the stone vases of the Mainland are considerably less numerous than the Cretan. A typological classification seems therefore more difficult for a material which covers four or more centuries from the 17th to the 13th cent. B.C. For this reason the stone imitations of the clay vases are precious. The stone one-handed cup with the bridge spout from a chamber tomb at Mycenae (Pl. V, 13) is a genuine Mycenaean product dated to the LH IIIA period, around 1400 B.C., like its clay prototypes. To the same period are dated a series of three handled amphorae (Pl. VI, 16), one of which has a height of 0,60m. These vases as well have many clay parallels. The material of the three-handled amphorae is also gypsum, a material used frequently in that period. From gypsum are constructed another series contemporary with the above series of vases, the alabastra (Pl. VI, 17) which recall the typical Mycenaean prototypes. Gypsum alabastra are known from Crete, found in the throne room of Knossos, dated to the period of the Mycenaean occupation of the island. Therefore, they are due to Mycenaean influence. The Mycenaean collection of the National Museum of Athens has also a unique gypsum vase in an entirely original shape, a square pyxis, with feet with interior circular cavities and a perfectly fitting lid with four triangular protuberances at the corners (Pl. VII, 18). This should be considered as a Mycenaean creation.

The Mycenaeans however did not use only gypsum. Following Minoan practices they used every monochrome or multicoloured stone which they had at their disposal, with admirable knowledge and sensitivity. The accidental veins and spots of the stone are used very often with dexterity, like the strokes of a painter, as is shown on a vase from the “House of Shields” from Mycenae (Pl. VII, 19). Alabaster, chlorite, serpentine, limestone, marble, poros, sandstone, schist, steatite, trachyte are the main Mycenaean stones with numerous instances of multicoloured varieties. The Mycenaeans were not satisfied, however, only with those. They had importations of raw material from abroad, even semiprecious stones from Egypt and the East.

59 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2366; P. Warren, op. cit. 32.
62 A. Furumark, op. cit. 22, fig. 3.
64 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2769, 3163, 9991; J.A. Sakellarakis op. cit. 192-3, pl. 37a-b.
65 A. Furumark, op. cit. 41, fig. 11.
68 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 9716; J.A. Sakellarakis, op. cit. n. 2.
On the Acropolis of Mycenae were found fragments of small vases of amethyst (Pl. VII, 20)⁷⁰ and agate⁷¹ which we consider as precious stones even today. It is also very interesting to note that similar examples are unknown at that time even in Crete. The Mycenaeans also exported unworked stone for the manufacture of vases, mainly from the mines in Laconia which were certainly used during these times. From a mine in Mani district near the modern village of Kyprianó, comes a deep red stone, the porphyry or the so-called “Antico-Rosso”⁷², used frequently in Minoan stone cutting⁷³. The material is naturally used in Mycenaean Greece as well, as we know from one large basin from Mycenae⁷⁴, in stone similar to that of the basin found in the antechamber of the throne room of Knossos⁷⁵. From a mine near the ancient Krokeai also in Laconia was extracted in Mycenaean times, the so-called Spartan basalt or Lapis Lacedaemonius⁷⁶ from which were made Mycenaean vases such as a vase from the “House of Shields” at Mycenae⁷⁷. It is noteworthy that masses of raw Spartan basalt were found in the so-called “Lapidary’s workshop” at Knossos⁷⁸. From Spartan basalt were made in Mycenaean Greece other shapes as well, like “sacred communion chalices” with horizontal grooves⁷⁹ and rhyta with vertical channels⁸⁰. Comparison with waste pieces of stone left over from the working of stone vases (Pl. IX, 23)⁸¹ is instructive, since it shows clearly the polishing of the finished work. Of the same importance is the comparison of three objects from Phylakopi, Melos: a block of wavy-banded alabaster or “polychrome stalactite” (Pl. VIII, 21)⁸² and two fragments of vases (Pl. VIII, 22)⁸³ from the same stone. It seems clear that the rough piece of stone is cut by a saw and this observation leads us to the question of the technique of the stone vases.

It should be mentioned at the beginning that we know little about the method of manufacture even of the Minoan stone vases⁸⁴ since the instructive

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⁷⁰ Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 1396.
⁷¹ Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2668.
⁷³ P. Warren, op. cit. 126.
⁷⁴ Nat. Mus.; P. Warren, op. cit. 7.
⁷⁵ A. Evans, op. cit. III 25, fig. 13; P. Warren, op. cit.
⁷⁸ A. Evans, op. cit. III 268ff., fig. 181.
⁷⁹ Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 9731.
⁸⁰ Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 9730.
⁸¹ Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 9725, 9727.
⁸² Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 10027.
⁸³ Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 10028, 10029.
half-finished vases are very few. From Egypt, however, there is more information as well as some representations of the stone workers. Undoubtedly the Cretan-Mycenaean techniques would have been similar. It is probable therefore that they removed the vase from the stone core with various bronze tools, including chisels, like those used for the hewing of stone for building. The hollowing out of the interior of the vase followed and at the same time the polishing of the exterior and the interior surfaces. The most difficult phase was of course the removal of the mass of stone from the interior of the vase for which they used a rotary drill, fixed on the lip of the vase by two stones. The traces of the drill are often visible in the interior of the vases (Pl. IX, 24). The material, from which these drills were made is, however, unknown. Perhaps they were not bronze since no examples have been found. Perhaps simpler rotary tools were used here, reeds, as we see in Egyptian frescoes, turned round by an arrow. In an Egyptian fresco in front of the stone vases are put smaller vases from one of which a spoon is projecting which seems to contain sand or emery stone. The Naxian emery stone was known as material useful for the easy removal of the stone. Polishing with oil completed the cycle of manufacture of a vase.

It must not be forgotten that the Mycenaeans were not inexperienced in the working of stone, not only for the monumental construction of walls but also for the miniature sculpture of the semiprecious stones from which they made seals. Friezes engraved on stone also decorated the kings' palaces. It is certain, however, that the working of a stone vase was not an easy task. It needed much time. Many of the works which we now admire needed months in the making. The execution was done in palace workshops as we know from the lapidaries' workshops which have been discovered in the Minoan palaces of Knossos, Zakros, and Mallia in Crete since of course only kings could import the raw material at that time. An indication of a Mycenaean workshop we have from three stone vases

85 A. Lucas-J.R. Harris, op. cit. 423.
87 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2223; Cf. a vase from the House of Shields of Mycenae, A.J.B. Wace, BSA 50, 1955, pl. 23b.
88 Budge, Wall decorations of Egyptian Tombs, 1914, fig. 8; P. Warren, op. cit. pl. 633.
89 P. Warren, op. cit. 160.
90 For the technique of seal engraving cf. J.A. Sakellarakis, Arch. Ephem. 1972, 234-244.
92 N. Platon, op. cit. 218.
which were found in the tholos tomb of Menidi (Pl. IX, 25) \(^{94}\) which have many similarities not only in the shape but also the material, as if they came from the hand of the same worker.

In two fragments of multicoloured stone vases from the Treasury of Atreus at Mycenae (Pl. X, 26) \(^{95}\) we follow another stage of workmanship and at the same time a new decorative technique on the exterior surface of the vases where deep cavities are opened to receive different inlays. Here are still visible the traces of the drill. The same technique is shown by another fragment of stone vase from the acropolis of Mycenae (Pl. X, 27) \(^{96}\) of which a small inlaid piece is preserved. The piece is unfortunately so small that we cannot study exactly the aesthetics of the Mycenaeans, who preferred to put an inlay on the same colour as the veins of the stone and still decorated the surface with rows of incised circles. A more complete picture we obtain from a rhyton which comes from the “House of Shields” at Mycenae (Pl. X, 29) \(^{97}\). The vase here is separated into vertical zones by channels and incisions and is decorated with incised herringbone and a series of inlays which have disappeared. This decoration could be made by little bronze knives of which many are known from different Mycenaean sites.

In comparison with Crete the number of decorated stone vases is limited. An alabaster fragment of a jug from a chamber tomb at Mycenae shows in the upper surface of the lip a series of inverted ivy leaves (Pl. X, 28) \(^{98}\). It seems that here we have an imitation of a metal vase as illustrated by a bronze jug from Thera \(^{99}\) which has also the zone with vertical incisions at the circumference of the decorative zone. The large basin from Mycenae mentioned above has on its rim engraved spirals. Worthy of admiration for its perfection is also a piece from a big alabaster basin from another chamber tomb at Mycenae (Pl. XI, 30) \(^{100}\) with the broad leaves covering the whole surface of the vase save the grooves which emphasize the lip and the handles. Limited in number in Mycenaean Greece is also the class of stone relief vases from which so many Minoan masterpieces are known. The only complete example is a spherical vase in shape of an ostrich egg of serpentine coming from a chamber tomb at Mycenae (Pl. XI, 31) \(^{101}\), decorated with octopuses and rocks.

\(^{96}\) Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2531.1.
\(^{97}\) Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 7390; A.J.B. Wace, op. rut. 183, fig. 4.
\(^{98}\) Chamber Tomb 102; Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 4926.
\(^{99}\) S. Marinatos, AAA 4, 1971, 64, fig. 10.
\(^{100}\) Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 3162.
\(^{101}\) Chamber Tomb 26; Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2490; Ch. Tsountas, Arch. Ephem. 1888,
It is generally accepted that the upper part of the vase was made in Crete and
the lower in Mycenaean Greece since not only is the stone of the two parts
different but also the working and, as we know, this is not the first remade
stone vase. The symmetrically placed octopus of the lower part is already
typical of Mycenaean work as it is known from different parallels in
clay and its dating to the early 14th cent. B.C. seems certain. A contem­
porary, or slightly later, cylindrical alabaster pyxis from a chamber tomb at
Antheia in Achaia now in the Patras Museum\(^{102}\) is also a Mycenaean work.
The material, the subject, and the technique, the nautilus in alternative zones,
are typically Mycenaean. The flattened execution recalls actual Mycenaean
ivory works\(^{103}\) as do the handles, which project in the shape of figure-of­
eight shaped shields\(^{104}\). We know similar pyxides from Crete, as the example
from the Metaxas Collection\(^{105}\) which was probably made in the age of the
Mycenaean occupation of the island. From a Mycenaean cylindrical pyxis of
black steatite is preserved the upper part with the scene of a bull fighter in a
rare moment, the leaping over the bull (Pl. XII, 32)\(^{106}\). The fragment is of
particular interest not only for its subject but also for the site of its discovery.
It comes from the last century's excavations on the Acropolis of Athens and is
significant for its connection with the well known myth of Theseus and the
Minotaur\(^{107}\), and relations between Athens and Crete\(^{108}\) as well as the later
sacrifice of bulls in the festival of Bouphonia on the Athenian Acropolis\(^{109}\),
since both are connected with bull fighting\(^{110}\). The last relief vase from
Mycenaean Greece, the fragment of a rhyton from the sanctuary of Apollo

\(^{102}\) N. Kyparissis, Praktika 1937, 91, fig. 10; E. Vermeule, AJA 64, 1960, 12-3,
fig. 34, pl. 5.
\(^{103}\) A.J.B. Wace, BSA 49, 1954, pl. 39a.
\(^{104}\) Op. cit. pl. 34; J.A. Sakellarakis, Atti e Memorie del 1° Congresso Internazionale
di Micenologia, Roma 1968, 253-4, pl. V.
\(^{106}\) M. Mayer, JdIJ 7, 1892, 80, fig.; A. Reichel, AM 34, 1909, 93, fig. 13.
\(^{107}\) M. Nilsson, The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology, 1932, 163ff., 170ff.,
\(^{108}\) Cf. G. Mylonas, Athens and Minoan Crete, Harvard Studies in Classical Philo­
logy, Suppl. vol. I, 1940, 11-36.
\(^{109}\) B. Tamaro, Annuario 3-4, 1921-2, 1-11; L. Deubner, Attische Feste, Berlin 1956,
Mycenaean Stone vases

Maleatas at Epidaurus, is undoubtedly a Mycenaean work as is shown not only from its execution but also from the subject. In the fragment is pictured a procession of men on a mountain on the upper row and others below, covered by tower-shaped shields. Perhaps at the right is pictured the prow of a ship and for this reason there is a similarity in the subject with the recently found miniature frescoes of Thera.

The last stone vase to be considered was a rhyton, a religious vase. To another rhyton, a theriomorphic one, belongs a fragment which comes from Mycenae. It is a rhyton in the shape of a bull's head (Pl. XII, 33) the same as the stone rhyta from Zakros and Knossos, from which the inlaid eye and the horn are lacking. The subtle rendering of the hair and the rosette recall Minoan works and therefore it is not certain whether this rhyton, like another from which a piece of the neck of the animal is preserved, is Mycenaean. To a ritual vase belongs also the base of a multicoloured marble vase from a chamber tomb in Nauplia (Pl. XII, 35). It is the base of a "sacred communion chalice" as we know from the "sacred communion chalice" from Zakros, magnificent in dexterity and preservation. On the well known signet ring from the treasure of Tiryns is represented the goddess raising a similar vase, ready to accept the offering of deamons from the ceremonial jugs they hold. Such an alabaster jug imitating a metallic prototype, we know from a chamber tomb at Mycenae (Pl. XII, 34).

It would be reasonable to mention here the identification, for the first time in the study of the stone cutting art, of some seemingly architectural,
members, small capitals, as an example with leaf decoration from Mycenae\textsuperscript{121}. These objects have a cavity at the top but are not pure architectural members since they support nothing and in the lower part have a very complicated system of holes. These holes are designed to receive wedges, that is to connect two members, the capital and the column, as is shown in the combination of those two elements from the finds of Zakros (Pl. XIII, 36-7)\textsuperscript{122}. The subject becomes more interesting because, for the first time, we can identify well known iconographical objects\textsuperscript{123} with actual finds. These columns were used like altars to receive the different offerings and were crowned sometimes by different religious symbols like the sacral horns\textsuperscript{124}. To such a column and not to a lamp belongs also the well known shaft from the SE House of Knossos\textsuperscript{125}. A second capital from Mycenae (Pl. XIV, 41)\textsuperscript{126} belonging to a similar column shows the extension to and the use of the type on the Mainland as well.

Stone vases were used not only for official worship but also for everyday life. The distribution of the stone vases is standard in all the large or small Mycenaean centres. Vases from Mycenae, Tiryns, Vapheio, Nauplia and Menidi have already been mentioned. There are other vases and utensils from Pylos\textsuperscript{127}, Dendra\textsuperscript{128}, Thoricos\textsuperscript{129}, Thebes\textsuperscript{130}, Asine\textsuperscript{131}, even at the more remote Skopelos. From a tomb there comes an alabaster cup\textsuperscript{132}. As is natural the more important vases come from the royal shaft graves or tholos tombs. Often, however, common houses and simple chamber tombs provide interesting examples, mainly the chamber tombs of Mycenae. It must however be considered as certain that, contrary to the custom of the early ages of Crete and the well known Egyptian practices, the vases which were found in the

\textsuperscript{121} Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 10005.
\textsuperscript{122} For the capital see N. Platon, op. cit. 68; B. Wesenberg, Kapitelle und Basen, Düsseldorf 1971, Abb. 1; For the shaft (Her. Mus. Inv. Nr. 3087) N. Platon, Praktika 1965, 205.
\textsuperscript{123} B. Wesenberg, op. cit. Abb. 41-66.
\textsuperscript{125} A. Evans, PM I, 345, fig. 249; S. Marinatos-M. Hirmer, op. cit. 118 right.
\textsuperscript{126} Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 10000.
\textsuperscript{127} C. Blegen-M. Rawson, The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia, I, Cincinnati 1966, 242, fig. 271-2; III, 24.
\textsuperscript{128} A. Persson, The Royal Tombs at Dendra, near Midea, Lund 1931, 86, fig. 59, 100ff., figs. 77-9; A. Persson, New Tombs, Lund 1942, 56, 57, 101.
\textsuperscript{129} Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 3692. V. Stais, Arch. Ephem. 1895, 295.
\textsuperscript{130} A.D. Keramopoulos, Arch. Ephem. 1910, 233; A.D. Keramopoulos, Arch. Delt. 135, 175.
\textsuperscript{131} A. Persson-O. Frödin, Asine, Stockholm 1938, fig. 247.
\textsuperscript{132} Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 9074; N. Platon, Kret. Chron. 3, 1949, 551.
Mycenaean Stone vases were not made for burial purposes. They are vases used in life, and they simply followed their owners to the grave.

It is difficult to determine the real use of each stone vase. From Egypt we know that a class of spherical vase were used for perfumes. It is probable that this was the use of some Mycenaean stone vases but not of all of them. The stone vase had a wide use in everyday life. One class of low tripod vases (Pl. XIV, 39) was made from trachyte. Those are not thought to have been locally made but to have been imported from Syria. These tripod vases were used largely for the grinding of the grain as well as for the grating of colours. The luxurious lamps of that time were made of stone, in accordance with well known Minoan prototypes, with decoration very often at the lip (Pl. XIV, 38, 40). These lamps have a characteristic shape - a cylindrical foot, a broad lip, and two protuberances used as handles. The lip in the interior opens into two parts in order to receive a wick. Some lamps preserve signs of fire like one from Thorikos. The central cavity was filled with oil or fat and into it were put the wicks burning at their two ends and giving of lamps, with a high foot, like a specimen of porphyry with four wick-spouts.

These stone lamps illumine in the real sense of the word the subject of the private life of Mycenaeans for which they were used in everyday life. The lamp of porphyry mentioned above was found in a chamber tomb at Mycenae. Undoubtedly it did not light a megaron or a palace but a room in a rich bourgeois house. The high living standards of the Mycenaeans are, I think, clearly demonstrated by the fact that they had for everyday use objects which, even in our times of technical expertise, seem precious things — creations, which required much laborious work and great artistic sensitivity, objects which show undoubtedly a high stage of civilization.

133 V. Poulsen, Ägyptische Kunst, München 1968, 40-1; Cf. the vase Inv. Nr. 4088 of the Egyptian Collection of the National Archaeological Museum at Athens.
134 Dr. L. Godart pointed out that the big stone vases could also be used for perfumes, since in the Linear B tablets there are references to great quantities of them.
137 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 1902, 3125, 7315; Cf. also above n. 127, 128.
138 Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 2921, 3161, 3692, 4568, 4924, 4925.
139 Cf. n. 129.
140 Chamber Tomb 88; Nat. Mus. Inv. Nr. 3159. Ch. Tsountas-I. Manatt, The Mycenaean Age, Cambridge 1897, 80, fig. 31; V. Stais, op. cit. 128, 166; P. Warren, PPS 33, 1967, 48, Nr. N 34; P. Warren, Minoan Stone Vases, 58.