

A BATH-TUB LARNAX FROM TOURLOTI (SITIA), EAST CRETE

by METAXIA TSIPOPOULOU and LUCIA VAGNETTI*

1. *Introduction*

The area of Tourloti is known to archaeologists since the beginning of this century when R. B. Seager (1909, 286) reported a LM III cemetery. He believed at the time that the main settlement of Mochlos was transferred there in LM III times, in that it is a much more protected area, while still using the same harbour¹. One of his finds – a LM IIIC octopus stirrup jar – is preserved in the University Museum at Philadelphia².

Two other locations have archaeological remains: first at Plakalona where on various occasions chamber tombs have been excavated (Papadakis 1938; Platon 1959; Leekley, Noyes 1975, 69; Kanta 1980, 173; Papadakis 1984, 306; Tsiopoulou 1995, 186; Löwe 1996, 164-5); second at Kastellos, where (architectural?) remains and sherds were seen by R. C. Bosanquet and R. W. Hutchinson respectively (Pendlebury 1939, 266).

One of the present authors (M. T.) collected in 1984, following a rescue

* The two authors are equally responsible for the study of the larnax. The introductory section containing the archaeology of the area is written by M.T., while the part concerning the bronzes is by L.V. The preparation of this article has also been made possible by a C.N.R. grant, in the framework of the «Short Term Mobility» program, which enabled M. T. to spend three weeks in Rome in November 1998.

¹ Recent intensive fieldwork on the coastal area, where the modern village of Mochlos is located, uncovered an important LM III cemetery, starting in LM IIIA:1 (Papadakis 1986, 228; Soles, Davaras 1996, 210-22). This research proved the existence of a substantial coastal settlement with many external relations. Since no trace of this settlement has been revealed on the coast, the excavators believe that the necropolis belonged to the LM III reoccupation of the island itself. The importance of this discovery shows how rewarding an intensive survey over the whole hinterland of Mochlos would be, and may outline more clearly the character of the Mochlos-Myrsini-Tourloti area as a Postpalatial centre (Tsiopoulou 1995, 189).

² Betancourt 1983, 52, n. 137, fig. 14, pl. 12; the vessel has been erroneously reported as decorated with birds by Tsiopoulou 1995, 180.



Fig. 1 – Larnax from Tourloti. Side A.

excavation of a disturbed chamber tomb at Plakalona, coarse sherds including pithoi and tripod cooking pots from the hill above Plakalona, presumably coming from a settlement (Tsipopoulou 1995, 186). A LM IIIC plain stirrup jar from Tourloti, preserved in the Iraklion Museum, has been illustrated by Kanta (1980, 173, fig. 66:9).

A bath-tub larnax decorated with birds and snakes on display in the Ayios Nikolaos Museum was given to the Museum by M. Figetakis and illustrated by Davaras (n.d., pl. 71). The item has several points of interest both for details of the shape and mainly for its decoration and certainly deserves a more complete presentation³.

During recent cleaning of the piece some fragments of bronze objects were found on the bottom of the larnax. They have been cleaned and conserved by the conservator of the Museum A. Nikakis and are included in this publication.

³ We thank Prof. C. Davaras for his kind permission to study the larnax from Tourloti and the Ministry of Culture for the publication permit. The drawings of the larnax are by C. Fugalli and A. Mancini and those of the bronzes are by L. Vagnetti (inking by C. Paschalidis); the photographs are by I. Papadakis-Ploumidis. Special thanks go to A. Nikakis, conservator of the Ayios Nikolaos Museum, for his kind assistance during our study and to D. W. Rupp and M. Wedde for checking the English text. L. Alberti has offered some useful suggestions concerning the iconography of the cuttlefish, while F. Lo Schiavo e M. Bettelli have been very helpful for the classification of the fibulae; M. Rocchi's bibliographical suggestions for the symbolic meaning of some animal representation have been of great value.



Fig. 2 – Larnax from Tourloti. Side B.

2. Description

A.N.M. 1706 (figs. 1-8). H. 0.45 m; max. w. 1.015 m.; min. w. 0.55 m; th. rim 0.04/0.045 m. Handles: h. 0.06 m; w. 0.16 m.

Bath-tub larnax with slightly curving profile. Torus base; thick flat horizontal rim of trapezoid section; four horizontal handles of elliptical section, on the upper body, with horizontal groove and finger impressions at attachments. Between the rim and the handles raised band with incised oblique lines. A single hole at junction between base and body in the middle of one narrow side (fig. 3, right).

Medium pink clay (5YR.6/6) with many medium-sized black inclusions; thick slip changing from pale grey on side A (5Y.7/2) to cream (10YR.8/3) on the other sides and on the interior; dark brown paint (5Y.4/1), changing to orange (2.5YR.5/8), due to uneven firing.

The larnax is intact, but for small chippings on rim and base. Two vertical cracks from the rim to middle body.

The external decoration is organized in vertical panels. Solid painted bands on the rim and on the base; framing bands between the raised band and the handles. On the upper surface of the rim short parallel strokes (fig. 4).

Long side A (figs. 1, 5:a): three panels, the central, set under the handle, is narrower; they are framed by groups of vertical lines, triglyphs, five lines at the external ends and three at the central. The central panel is decorated with a very debased palm motif, formed by a central vertical stem and two arc-shaped side elements spreading from its upper part. It is painted solid black with double contour lines. Each of the side panels carries a bird moving to the right; the birds look similar in general, but for a few details: they have fusiform bodies, filled with different combinations of straight and curved lines. The tails are fan-shaped and the legs are painted solid; the necks are elongated and decorated with oblique lines; the eyes are



Fig. 3 – Larnax from Tourloti. Sides C and D.

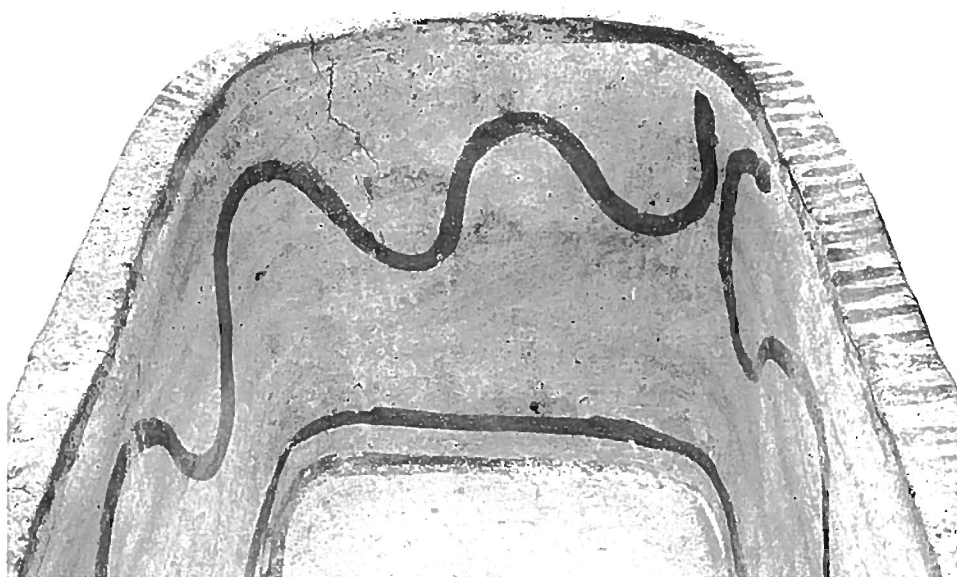


Fig. 4 – Larnax from Tourloti. Detail of the interior decoration.

formed by a reserved circle with central dot (left hand panel) or two concentric circles again with a dot (right panel). The beaks are open and the tongues are visible. The wings are rendered differently for each bird: the one on the left has two wings rendered by double wavy lines with vertical fringes, while the other has only one wing, made of a wavy band filled with oblique lines. The left-hand bird has a snake hanging from the beak, rendered by a vertical wavy line. The right-hand panel has a filling motif under the bird's body made of two antithetic concentric arcs, the lower with solid centre and the upper with hatched centre.

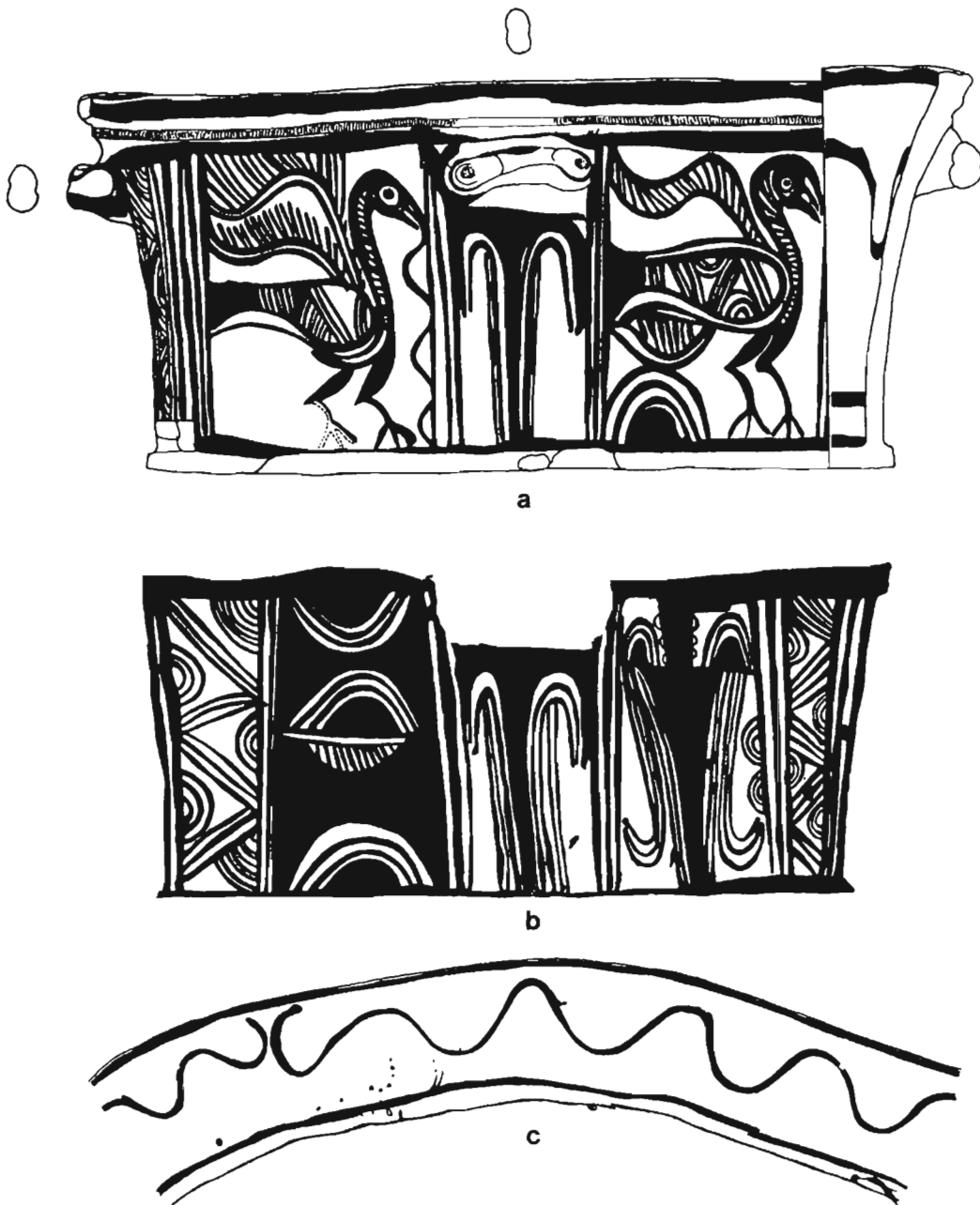


Fig. 5 – Larnax from Tourloti.
 a. Side A; b. Decoration of side B; c. Interior decoration (1:8).

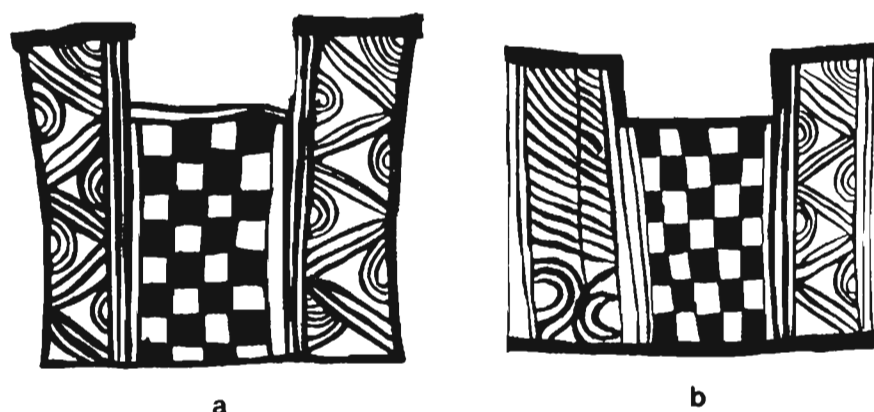


Fig. 6 – Larnax from Tournloti. a. Decoration of side C; b. Decoration of side D (1:8).

Long side B (figs. 2, 5:b): five vertical panels divided by three vertical lines each. The panels on either end have multiple vertical zig-zag motifs with isolated semicircles and concentric arcs. The central panel, set under the handle, is identical to the symmetric panel on the other side. The panel to its left has three groups of reserved semicircles and, at the centre, a hatched crescent. The panel to the right contains a very schematized version of a cuttlefish motif, in which the body is rendered as a solid vertical triangle with double contour lines, pointing down; the eyes, set above the base of the triangle, are rendered by two solid semicircles with double contour lines; the tentacles are rendered as hanging hook-shaped multiple tongues. A filling motif between the eyes is a sort of triglyph motif with solid centre and side vertical rows of semicircles. Two groups of isolated concentric semicircles fill the right end of the panel in the middle.

Short side C (figs. 3:a, 6:a): three panels, divided by three vertical lines. The central, set under the handle, is decorated with a chequer pattern. The side panels are decorated with multiple vertical zig-zag motifs with isolated semicircles and concentric arcs of the same type represented at both ends of side B.

Short side D (figs. 4, 5:c): very close to side C, but for the left side panel that displays a hatched pattern with a vertical line in the middle and two anthitetic groups of concentric semicircles at the base.

Interior decoration (figs. 4, 5:c): a band at rim and two bands at the junction between base and body. A very schematic representation of snakes covers entirely the body, rendered as a long wavy band, slightly flattened at both ends to represent the two heads (or head and tail), very close to each other. Drops of paint at various spots.

3. Discussion

Shape. The larnax belongs to the bath-tub variety and has almost vertical walls. Apparently this is a characteristic of late bath-tubs, especially in

Eastern Crete (Kanta 1980, pls. 63:6 from Episkopi, 81:5 from Moulia; Tsipopoulou and Vagnetti 1997, pls. 181-184, 186:a, 187-188)⁴. The bath-tub larnax, very common in central and eastern Crete is rare west of Knossos. Only recently an example of this shape has been found at Chania, in the Koube cemetery (Andreadaki-Vlasaki 1997, 492-3, pl. IIIb)⁵.

Two special features of the Tourloti larnax, the incised decoration on the raised band and the deep fingerprints at both ends of the four handles, have good parallels at the nearby site of Moulia (Xanthoudides 1904, fig. 9, 40-42; Kanta 1980, 81:5). Also on chest-shaped larnakes the raised bands under the rim sometimes bear similar decorations either plastic or painted with oblique strokes⁶. However, the incised raised band on the Tourloti larnax is very close to features typical of LH IIIC craters (Mountjoy 1986, fig. 225:1-3) and representing, once more, a typological and technical connection between workshops producing larnakes and vessels (Tsipopoulou, Vagnetti 1995, 144-145; 1997, 475)⁷.

Motifs. The following motifs have been used in the decoration of the Tourloti larnax (fig. 7):

a) A bird (FM 7) occurs two times on long side A. Birds are common throughout the LM III period on vases and larnakes (Lenz 1996). They are represented either with wings open (in flight?) or closed on the body; with long or shorter necks and legs; with open or closed beaks; the body ends with fan-shaped or fish-shaped tail. The arrangements in which they appear are mainly three: a) isolated, especially in ritual scenes (e.g. Rethemiotakis, 1979, fig. 3); b) in heraldic position with a central element, usually floral

⁴ Pending a thorough typological classification of the Cretan larnakes, it is difficult to decide whether the presence or absence of certain features is due to chronological reasons or to regional and/or workshop variations. Once again the need for a corpus of LM III larnakes should be stressed.

⁵ According to Mavriyannaki (1972, 116-7) followed by Andreadaki-Vlasaki (1997, 492-3), the rare instances of this shape in western Crete indicate that they have been used as real bath-tubs before their deposition in tombs. This opinion is based on the fact that bath-tubs have been found also in settlement contexts, especially on the Greek Mainland. A bath-tub larnax has been recently found in Achaea (Mountjoy 1997, 128, fn. 111) and from the brief description it seems very close to examples which are typical of Eastern Crete (Tsipopoulou, Vagnetti 1997).

⁶ Mavriyannaki 1972, 41-4, pl. 2-3 (plastic decoration); 71-5, pl. 29-33 (painted strokes); this last larnax is without provenance and is identical, but for a few details, to examples found at Kritsa and Milatos in Eastern Crete.

⁷ The site of Moulia, very close to Tourloti, offers once again an interesting parallel. The crater, found in Tholos A, containing a cremation, has under the rim a horizontal raised band with oblique white painted strokes, which clearly imitate incisions (Xanthoudides 1904, 32-35, pl. 3).



a1



a2



b



c



e



f



h



i



d

Fig. 7 – Larnax from Tourloti. Main decorative patterns.

(e.g. Watrous 1991, pl. 91:d); c) in panels. The larnax of Tourloti falls within this last variety, whose earliest and perhaps more successful example is represented by the well known LM IIIA:1 larnax from Palaikastro (Bosanquet 1901-2, pl. 19; Watrous 1991, pl. 82:a-b).

It is not easy to decide to which species these and other similar birds belong. Other scholars have attempted to find a criterium for a classification; Alexiou (1954, 407) supports the identification of birds with open wings with "perdix" (*alectoris graeca saxatilis*) and Benson (1970, 63) believes that all birds with long legs are cranes. The case of the larnax from Palaikastro on which a bird with long legs has a short neck and a body that may be nearer to a perdix rather than to a crane shows how this kind of exercise may be pointless. Sometimes the birds are pecking flowers (Popham 1967, fig. 5:15) or hold a worm in their beak (Borda 1946, pl. 36, middle row, centre; Åkerström 1987, 40, n. 230, pl. 40). The long wavy line hanging from the beak of one of the birds on the Tourloti larnax may probably be better identified as a snake.

b) A cuttlefish (cf. FM 21) appears only once on side B. It is difficult to decide whether this extremely debased motif represents an octopus or a cuttlefish⁸. One can easily detect single linear motifs combined to form a "pictorial" figure. In particular a solid triangle pointing down is used to show the body. Two sets of concentric isolated semicircles with solid centre (FM 43:40) represent the eyes and two hook-shaped multiple tongues (FM 19:52) indicate the tentacles. The tendency to hybridize the plant and animal patterns on Late Bronze Age Aegean pottery has been already discussed by Furumark (1941, 288-92, fig. 43) who has outlined the mixing of the two worlds. The case represented on the Tourloti larnax is really extreme in its geometric rendering. On the other end of the scale there are examples of "pictorial" hybridization as on the central panel of an amphoroid crater from Episkopi Ierapetra, where the eyes of the octopus are rendered as rosettes (Kanta 1980, fig. 103:7).

c) The palm motif (cf. FM 15) occurs two times in the central panel on the long sides. It is a very debased form of the palm motif, which is used very

⁸ An interesting example of the same trend, although different from the Tourloti larnax, common throughout LH/LM IIIC, is represented by an octopus on a stirrup jar from Palaia Epidavros, on which the marine creature is formed by several geometric elements combined: multiple stems for the tentacles, a fusiform solid central part for the body ending at a single spiral representing the eyes. (Aravandinos 1974, fig. 1). Cf. the discussion of cuttlefish representations by Gill 1985, 77, fig. 22.

frequently on larnakes and sometimes on craters with animals at both sides in a heraldic arrangement (e.g. Rethemiotakis 1979, fig. 7:6; Watrous 1991, pls. 84:e; 87:a, d). In our case, although the motif keeps its function as a central vertical division of space it has lost the compositional pattern in relationship to the side panels on which the two birds are both represented facing right. The popularity of the palm motif on larnakes, especially during the LM IIIB period is well shown by two specimens from Gazi which display a number of examples of this motif with a strong degree of stylization (Watrous 1991, pl. 92:c-d, f-i).

d) A snake (cf. FM 8:8-9) is depicted two times, one hanging from the bird's beak (on side A) and the other on the interior surface. Snakes are extremely rare on LM III larnakes. We only know of another example from Kavrochori, dated to an early phase of LM IIIB (Rethemiotakis 1979, 250, fig. 8:26), which, however, is very small, and rendered with a double contour and a filling motif on the body, responding to a figurative convention different than that used on our example. Furumark (1941, 256) suggested that this convention probably imitates plastic decoration. On the Tourloti larnax the snake is represented as a wavy line both on the inner surface and on the long side panel, where it hangs from the bird's beak. The idea of filling a large space with a single snake (or two snakes joint at tails), although very unusual, finds a parallel on a crater from Mycenae on which the ordinary wavy line is transformed into a snake with the addition of a "bird's head" and some added splashes of white paint (Vermeule, Karageorghis, 1982, 144, 224, pl. XI.90).

e.1) There are isolated semicircles with solid centre, set in antithetic fashion (FM 43:40) as a main motif. This occurs two times on the same panel on side B. The lower example has a hatched crescent instead of the semicircle. It is also found as a filling motif, below the belly of one bird on side A, again with one hatched crescent and a solid centre, while two sets of semicircles (FM 43:c) are used to represent the eyes of the cuttlefish on the side B.

e.2) There are isolated semicircles (FM 43:j) used as filling motif on the panel with the cuttlefish.

e.3) There are isolated semicircles set in antithetic fashion (FM 43:38) which are used as a filling motif below the hatched panel on the short side D. When used as a filling motif, isolated semicircles, often set vertically along the side of panels, are derived from the so-called triglyph and half-rosette motif (FM 75:32-33; see also Borda 1946, pl. 38, top row, right). When this pattern has a solid centre and is set either isolated or in a row, it may well stand for a rock pattern. A very good example of the first step of transformation from pictorial to linear pattern is

represented by the larnax from Palaikastro, on which this pattern represents either sea-waves, when combined with fish, or land when combined with a bird or a griffin⁹. On the Tourloti larnax the same convention is used in one of the panels with a bird, under the belly of the animal¹⁰. The isolated semicircles with a solid centre in an antithetic arrangement and set against a solid black background are represented twice on the same panel on long side B. Similar patterns are used on the well known pyxis from Tragana on more than one panel (Kourouniotis 1914, figs. 13-14).

f) There is a zig-zag motif (FM 61:13), with complementary isolated semicircles (FM 43:j) and concentric arcs (FM 44), vertically set in five side panels on sides B, C, D. The same motif, set horizontally fills the body of one bird. Panels with simple zig-zag, leaf-shaped zig-zag, wavy lines or spirals are frequently used to decorate the frame in relief of the chest-shaped larnakes and are most likely a survival of incised motifs on wooden prototypes (Watrous 1991; Tsipopoulou, Vagnetti 1995, fig. 88).

g) An elaborate triangle (FM 71) occurs as a filling motif on the body of one of the birds. This pattern is very common on the shoulder of LM IIIC stirrup jars (Kanta 1980, 116:7). Similar combinations of straight lines and arcs are also very characteristic to decorate bird-shaped askoi especially in Eastern Crete and Cyprus (Desborough 1972, pls. 31:4, from Cyprus; 33:2, from Axos).

h) There is a chequer board pattern (FM 75:34) which is used twice in the central panel of the short sides. This motif is fairly common on larnakes, which have vertical panels (Kanta 1980, fig. 81:5); Watrous (1991 290, 81:b, d) assigns to it a purely decorative meaning, in imitation of inlays on wooden chests and furniture¹¹. Since it is found also on the skirts of goddesses with upraised arms, both as figurines (Alexiou 1958, pl. 5, fig. 2) and as representation on larnakes (Watrous 1991, pl. 91:e) it may also derive from woven patterns. The motif starts in LM IIIA, and continues throughout

⁹ Interestingly enough, on the lid of the same larnax the same motif is used in a purely decorative arrangement (Bosanquet 1901-2, pl. 18-19); cf. also a LM IIIB larnax in Ayios Nikolaos Museum (Watrous 1991, pl. 83:e). Another example of the transformation of a pictorial motif into a linear pattern can be found on a larnax from Klima, Messara, on which the argonaut (FM 22) appears both in a more or less naturalistic manner and schematically rendered as FM 43:c with the addition of two stemmed spirals (Rethemiotakis 1995, fig. 7).

¹⁰ For a LM IIIC parallel see Borda 1946, pl. 36, middle row, centre.

¹¹ A good example is a recent find from Pankalochori, Rethymnon (Baxevani-Kouzioni, Markoulaki 1996, fig. 31-32).

LM IIIC. Chequer board patterns are also used on pyxides¹² and even on open shapes, such as craters and trays¹³.

i) There is an unusual hatched pattern with a vertical line in the middle. To our knowledge the motif has no good parallel and it may be seen as an extremely stylized branch. It is worth mentioning here that a herringbone pattern is the most commonly used convention to represent branches¹⁴.

j) There is a panelled pattern with vertical rows of semicircles along the sides (cf. FM 75:29, but with solid centre). This is placed over the head of the cuttlefish and may represent another extreme example of the schematisation of the short tentacles of the cuttlefish (see above under b).

3. *Organization of the patterns*

The decoration on the Tourloti larnax is set in a series of panels which frame either pictorial motifs or purely linear patterns. The pictorial elements are rendered in a more or less naturalistic manner (birds) as well as in a very schematic style (cuttlefish and palm). The panel decoration is common on chest-shaped larnakes, deriving from wooden prototypes, whose shape is faithfully reproduced in clay, also in structural details, such as the wooden frames in relief, outlining rectangular surfaces to be decorated (Rutkowski 1968). Such partition of the surface is known as early as the LM IIIA, as one can surmise from the Palaikastro larnax (Bosanquet 1901-2, pl. 18). The curving surface of the bath-tub larnakes is better compatible with a free-field decoration, although examples of panel partitions exist as early as LM IIIA (Watrous 1991, pl. 83:f, from Milatos).

The origin of the decorative patterns found on the larnakes is most

¹² Alexiou 1954, pl. 7:2. It is interesting to remark that the pyxis from Pacheia Ammos, which is datable to LM IIIA, anticipates in the organization of the patterns, the style of LM IIIC pyxides, such as an example from Karphi (Seiradaki 1960, fig. 23). This is especially true in the use of double contour with solid interior and in the abundance of filling patterns.

¹³ Seiradaki 1960, pl. 8:c (spouted tankard) and an unpublished tray from Kritsa, from M. T.'s excavation 1993, both datable to LM IIIC. The chequer board is used also on craters in Mainland Greece as well as in Cyprus, cf. Vermeule and Karageorghis 1982, 205, 217, pls. V.103, X.48.

¹⁴ Xanthoudides 1904, pl. 3 on the Moulia crater; Seiradaki 1960, fig. 23; cf. also FM 58:31 and FM 75:35.

likely to be traced back to the wall-painting repertoire¹⁵. Later on one can identify a specific repertoire that encompasses single motives and their setting, as well as the possible symbolic meaning of some of the patterns. The setting of the motives is also related to similar developments in the ceramic production, being the two productions – pottery and larnakes – sometimes deriving from the same workshop (Rutkowski 1966, 140; Tsipopoulou, Vagnetti 1995, 131-45; 1997). Symmetry, panel organization and framed setting of the motives belong to the Helladic rather than to the Minoan decorative tradition. The free field decoration of vessel surface, very typical of Minoan decorative taste, as known e. g. in the Marine Style (Müller 1997), is clearly misunderstood in the earliest Mycenaean imitations of such a style in which frames, partition lines and series of non-functional handles set vertically, awkwardly cut the decorated space and underline the structure of the vessel (shape) against the continuity of the decoration¹⁶.

With an opposite process, the Cretan craftsmen of the Postpalatial period, adopting the decorative organization of Helladic type, often break the typical symmetry and the repetition of patterns, with the insertion of filling motives and the pictorialization of linear patterns¹⁷. The Tourloti larnax is an interesting example of such a trend. The general decorative scheme seems to be influenced by the Helladic taste for space definition; as a matter of fact, although it is a bath – tub, with curving walls, the surface is divided in four well defined sides, with no continuity of the decoration. However, one can assign to the Minoan taste the fact that the two long sides differ completely one from the other with a contraposition of predominant figurative patterns on side A and predominant schematized patterns on side B. Also the symmetry of the short sides is interrupted by the panel with a bush on side D with no correspondence on side C. The birds represented on side A are dissimilar in many details and proceed in the same direction, as on a frieze, although framed in panels and divided by a schematized palm. The three elements (two birds

¹⁵ For a recent discussion of the interconnections between wall-painting and larnakes cf. Rethemiotakis 1995, 171-172.

¹⁶ Interesting examples of such a process may be seen in the large LH IIA Palace Style amphorae, which, although imitating Minoan prototypes, display a clear change in the decoration taste. Cf. Kalogeropoulos 1998, pl. 42:a-b, from Kakovatos (handles and high black band at the base); pl. 41:d from Mycenae, on which the octopus head, set under the handle, is used as a partition element. Other examples decorated in Marine style are still close to Minoan prototypes; cf. Kalogeropoulos 1998, pl. 41:a-c from Routsis, Prosymna and Berbati.

¹⁷ On Mycenaean influence on LM IIIB-C pottery cf. Popham 1965, 335.

and a palm) would have suited better a heraldic composition (e.g. Mavriyannaki 1972, pl. 21). The palm, set in the centre of the long side A under the handle, returns on long side B, decorated with abstract patterns different one from the other. The only “pictorial” element on side B, the cuttlefish, is completely debased and divided in abstract elements such as the triangle, the concentric semicircles and the hook-shaped multiple tongues.

4. The bronzes

1. A.N.M. 1706 (fig. 9:a). H. 1.8 cm; pres. l. 5 cm; max. w. of bow 0.9 cm; th. 0.3 cm. Violin-bow fibula with leaf-shaped bow. Bow hammered into sheet with two bosses in relief. Heavy green incrustation prevents detecting if any *pointillée* decoration occurs along the edges. Catch-plate and half of the pin missing; heavy green incrustation.

2. A.N.M. 1708 (figs. 8, 9:b). H. 3.1 cm; l. 6 cm; max. th. 0.25 cm. Arched fibula of rectangular section, hammered into sheet above the catch-plate. Spring and pin of round section. Complete; green patina.

3. A.N.M. 1707 (figs. 8, 9:e). H. 3.8 cm; present w. between catch-plate and spring 2.6 cm; th. 0.3 cm; beads diam. 0.3/0.15 cm. Arched fibula of round section, rather twisted, with 16 disc-shaped *faïence* beads inserted along the arch; bow hammered into sheet above the catch-plate. The spring is broken and a part of the pin bent at one end is inserted in the spring; three beads are fragmentary.

4. A.N.M. 1706 (fig. 9:d). Pr. l. 1.2 cm; th. 0.2 cm; diam. of the largest bead 0.9 cm. Part of a similar fibula (?). Only part of the arch is preserved, with three *faïence* beads of different diameter.

5. A.N.M. 1706 (fig. 9:c). Diam. 2 cm; th. 0.2 cm. Thin ring of flat section. Incomplete.

– Two fragments of rod of round and of rectangular section respectively.



Fig. 8 – Bronze fibulae found in the larnax from Tourloti (1:1).

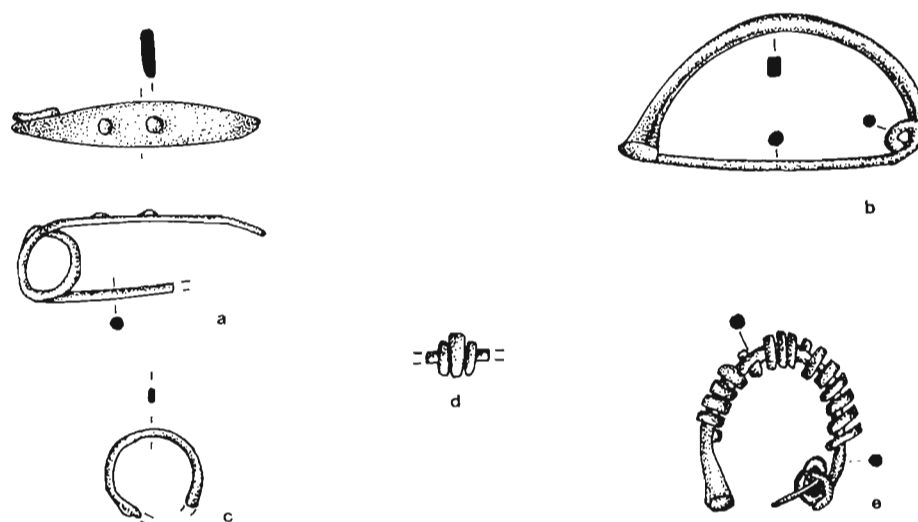


Fig. 9 – Bronze fibulae and ring found in the larnax from Tourloti (2:3).

Leaf-shaped fibulae occur in Crete and are common in the eastern part of the island; in particular a number of items from Psychro and from Karphi are decorated with series of bosses in relief as our example (Blinkenberg 1926, 51-54; Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, 37-39, pls. 1:21-23, 2:26-29). However, the most convincing parallels for the Tourloti fibula can be found on Mainland Greece (Kilian 1985, 173-188). The closest one comes from Kierion in Thessaly (Kilian 1975, 18, pl. 1:2; 1985, fig. 5:IB1), while three examples from the Kolonaki necropolis at Thebes equally bear a decoration with bosses, whose arrangement is difficult to detect from the poor illustration (Keramopoulos, 1917, 151, 160, 162; figs. 111, 119:3; Blinkenberg 1926, 52, fig. 20; Kilian 1985, fig. 6:IC1). The Tourloti example is odd under two respects: the presence of only two bosses on the arch and its thickness. The heavy corrosion prevents to verify the existence of a third boss, that however seems unlikely; the same bad state of preservation may have altered the thickness of the arch, although parallels for this detail may be found at Perati (Iakovidis 1970, B', 274-7, fig. 121; Kilian 1985, fig. 6:IC2, IC3, IE1) and at Kos-Langada (Morricone 1965-66, 134, fig. 119; Sapouna-Sakellarakis, pl. 2:32; Kilian 1985, 183).

The arch-bow fibula with rectangular section and small one turn spring has good parallels in Eastern Crete. It belongs to Blinkenberg's type II.4 with provenances from Praisos, Vrokastro Kavousi and Psychro (Blinkenberg 1926, 63-64, figs. 34-36; Boardman 1961, fig. 16:B). It corresponds to Sapouna-Sakellarakis' type II.d, in which however different varieties have

been included (Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1978, 48-49, in part. pl. 6: 168, from Psychro and 190 from Vrokastro).

A good example of our type comes from Tomb 121 in the North Cemetery at Knossos (Catling 1996, 165, 524-26, fig. 162:121.f. 2, pl. 273) and, out of Crete, there is an example from Tomb 16 in the Skoubris cemetery at Lefkandi (Catling 1980, 115, n. 23, pl. 95:24).

It is more difficult to find parallels for the arched fibula with beads in the arch, for which, to the knowledge of the authors, there are no parallels in Crete or in the Aegean¹⁸.

5. *Chronology and final remarks*

Pending excavations data, the chronology of the larnax may be based on two types of evidence: first the typology and style of the object itself and, second, the typology of the accompanying bronzes. The shape of the bath-tub is characterized by almost vertical walls, which occur in late examples (LM IIIC), particularly frequent in Eastern Crete. These include finds from Mouliaia (Xanthoudides 1904, fig. 9; Kanta 1980, fig. 81:5), from the area around Sitia bay (Tsipopoulou, Vagnetti 1997, pls. 181-183) and from Kritsa (Tsipopoulou, Vagnetti 1997, pl. 186:a)¹⁹. Moreover, the raised band with incised strokes set under the rim is very close to Mainland craters belonging to LH IIIC (Mountjoy 1986, fig. 225:1-3). The decoration of the larnax is also consistent with a chronology within the LM IIIC period. Most of the single patterns find parallels in that period; furthermore the schematization of pictorial patterns, such as the very extreme example of the cuttlefish, are certainly at home at the end of the Bronze Age.

Unfortunately, as it is well known, a reliable chronological sequence within the LM IIIC period is not yet available. Although in our discussion we have constantly given references to Furumark's motives, we are perfectly aware that their chronological value could only partially be applied for Postpalatial Crete. The general aspect of the larnax decoration can be compared to examples of the "close style" from Crete, especially as known at Karphi (Seiradaki 1960, fig. 25). This suggests a production date in a middle phase of LM IIIC, preceding its extreme end and the Subminoan period.

Turning to the associated bronzes we may stress that the proposed date

¹⁸ Similar decoration is used on fibulas with lowered arch in Italian contexts of the Iron Age (von Eles Masi 1986, pl. 29:433-433A; d'Agostino, Gastaldi 1988, pl. 20:32C,7a).

¹⁹ See as a contrast the very everted profile of an early bath-tub from Milatos (Watrous 1991, pl. 85:f).

is consistent with the violin bow fibula, which is close to examples dated, according to Kilian (1985, 182-4), to LH/LM IIIC. The problem becomes more complicated if we consider the two arched fibulas. While we cannot suggest any parallel for fibulae n. 3-4, with beads in the arch, fibula n. 2 has good parallels from the North Cemetery at Knossos, Tomb 121 (Catling 1996, fig. 162:121.f. 2) and from Lefkandi-Skoubris, Tomb 16 (Catling 1980, pl. 95:24), which at the earliest should fall at the transition between Subminoan and Protogeometric periods²⁰.

It is probable that the larnax after the first burial was re-opened for at least a new deposition, a practice that is not unknown elsewhere in Crete²¹. In Eastern Crete one can mention the case of a rectangular LM IIIC tholos tomb at Photoula Praisou, where a larnax with an inhumated skeleton contained also a plain pyxis with remains of cremation (Platon 1960, 303-5, pls. 243, 244:a). The coexistence of larnakes for inhumation and the remains of cremation is known also at Kritsa, again in LM IIIC, in a tomb excavated by one of the present authors (M. T.) in 1993²². At Berati Piskokephalou a chest-shaped larnax was found in a burial cave that was in use in LM IIIC, the Geometric and Early Orientalizing periods (Platon 1952, 639-43). Another case is represented by a bath-tub larnax and a LM III chest-shaped vessel from a tholos tomb at the cemetery between Sykia and Adromyloi, dated by the excavator mainly in the Protogeometric and Geometric periods (Platon 1954, 365-6, figs. 5-6). A similar practice is known also in the Messara, where a tholos tomb of the Protogeometric and Geometric periods contained a plain larnax, set in the centre, surrounded by a large number of accompanying vessels (Platon 1958, 468)²³. These cases may support the hypothesis that the Turloti larnax received more than one burial within a span of time encompassing the middle phase of LM IIIC and the Subminoan-beginning of Protogeometric period.

As a last point we cannot help mentioning the possible meaning of some

²⁰ For a recent discussion of the introduction of the arched fibula in Crete and in the Aegean cf. Catling 1996, 524-6.

²¹ In general for the use of larnakes after the end of the Bronze Age cf. Rutkowski 1966, 140.

²² For a preliminary discussion of the larnakes from the Kritsa tomb cf. Tsipopoulou, Vagnetti 1997.

²³ The larnax and the chest-shaped vessel point to a LM IIIC date for starting of the use of this cemetery. For a good parallel for this rare type of vase from Kastelli, Pediada cf. Rethemiotakis 1997, 311-2, figs. 13-15:a. This date is also confirmed by the examination, in 1980, of the totality of the material, stored in the Herakleion Museum, following a permission of the late Professor Platon, by M.T. There are in fact several stirrup jars, typical of the LM IIIC close style. It appears that in the Sitia area many LM III tombs were reused in the 9th and 8th centuries.

of the motives used to decorate the larnax. The combination of birds and snakes has been viewed as loaded with symbolic meaning, being the bird a life element flying in the air and the snake a chthonian element belonging to the underworld; on the other hand the snake may also allude to renovation thanks to his capacity of changing his skin (Keller 1913, 284-305; Küster, 1913; Bodson 1978, 68-92). The association of the two creatures, very common in the decoration of Greek Geometric pottery (Roes 1933, 56-60), is also found in Postpalatial Crete, especially connected to the "Goddesses with upraised arms" (Alexiou 1958; Gesell 1985, 41-56; Pötscher 1990, 102-7; Marinatos 1993, 223-7). In particular a figure from the Minoan "villa" at Kannia, near Gortina, has snakes on her head and arms and a bird on her cheek (Levi 1959, fig. 34:a; Alexiou 1958, 195-202, pl. 7:1-2; Marinatos 1993, 227).

Both the bird and the snake have also been considered as "the embodiment of the deity, a form of its epiphany" (Nilsson 1950, 332) for the Bronze Age, while the snake in Classical Greece may represent the dead, as well as a hero or a god (Nilsson 1967, 198).

This is not the place for a thorough treatment of this fascinating subject, which certainly deserves specialist attention, but we think that it represents a further element of interest for the Tourloti larnax, which stands out from the majority of the contemporary production, not only for the many interesting aspects of its decoration, but also for the possible preservation of the symbolic meaning of its iconography in a late phase of Minoan Crete²⁴.

Metaxia Tsipopoulou
National Archaeological Museum
Tossitsa 1
GR – 10682 Athenai

Lucia Vagnetti
Istituto per gli Studi Micenei
ed Egeo-Anatolici (CNR)
Via Giano della Bella, 18
I – 00162 Roma

²⁴ The snake/snakes representation inside the larnax is also evocative of a belief, known through classical sources, according to which the marrow contained in the dead's spine may give origin to a snake (Antig., *Mir.*, 89; Ovid., *Met.*, 15, 385-90; Pli., *N. H.*, X, 66; Plu., *Cleom.*, 39); cf. also Marasco 1981, 653-4.

ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

A.N.M. = Ayios Nikolaos Museum

FM = Furumark Motif

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