

# THE ORIGIN AND ICONOGRAPHY OF THE LATE MINOAN PAINTED LARNAX

(PLATES 81–93)

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BEGINNING in the 14th century B.C., the clay chest-shaped coffin, known as a larnax, became the standard burial vessel used on the island of Crete.<sup>1</sup> These rectangular chests set on legs had gabled lids, and some examples had raised borders around their margins, an arrangement probably derived from wooden models. A number of the larnakes were painted with a variety of naturalistic motifs and scenes, which make these chests the richest source of pictorial art in Late Minoan III Crete.<sup>2</sup> This article discusses the origin of the Late Minoan larnax, assembles the full variety of published larnax motifs and scenes, and interprets their iconography. In order to understand many of the motifs, their earlier use on Aegean frescoes and vase painting and in Egyptian tomb painting is considered.

In the Late Minoan I period, Minoan civilization reached the full extent of its influence. The Minoans traded directly with much of the Aegean, Cyprus, the Levant, and Egypt. In Late Minoan IB most of the towns and palaces on Crete, Knossos excepted, were

<sup>1</sup> This paper was first presented in the Aegean Bronze Age Symposium at the Institute of Fine Arts (New York University) in October 1983. Ellen Davis, Charlotte Long, and Gisela Walberg read subsequent drafts of the paper and made a number of helpful suggestions. I am indebted to James Weinstein and William Peck for answering my questions about Egypt and the Near East. Nikolas Platon and Katerina Baxevannis courteously granted me permission to publish photographs of larnakes from Episkopi, Giofyrakia, and Armenoi. Harriet Blitzer edited the manuscript.

Frequently cited works are abbreviated as follows:

- Alexiou = S. Alexiou, *Ὑστερομινωϊκοὶ τάφοι λιμένος Κνωσοῦ (Κατσαμπά)*, Athens 1967  
Gesell = G. Gesell, *Town, Palace, and House Cult in Minoan Crete (SIMA 67)*, Göteborg 1985  
Kanta = A. Kanta, *The Late Minoan III Period in Crete (SIMA 58)*, Göteborg 1980  
Mavriyannaki = C. Mavriyannaki, *Recherches sur les larnakes minoennes de la Crète occidentale (Incunabula graeca 54)*, Rome 1972  
Morgan = L. Morgan, "A Minoan Larnax from Knossos," *BSA* 82, 1987, pp. 171–200  
Pini = I. Pini, *Beiträge zur minoischen Gräberkunde*, Wiesbaden 1968  
VK = E. Vermeule and V. Karageorghis, *Mycenaean Pictorial Vase Painting*, Cambridge, Mass. 1982

The photographic source or primary publication of each plate is listed on pp. 306–307 below.

<sup>2</sup> B. Rutkowsky (*Larnasky Egejskie*, Warsaw 1966) presents a list of published examples and discusses the evolution of the shape. His conclusions also appear in "The Origin of the Minoan Coffin," *BSA* 63, 1968, pp. 219–228. Mavriyannaki provides a full study of ten painted larnakes from the area of Rethymnon in West Crete. E. Vermeule, "Painted Mycenaean Larnakes," *JHS* 85, 1965, pp. 123–148 focuses on the Mycenaean examples.

The format of this article is to a great extent a result of the facts that many painted larnakes remain unpublished or only partly published and that a complete publication of all Cretan larnakes has been promised by Greek scholars.

This article focuses primarily on Minoan chest-shaped coffins, not on the Early Minoan—Late Minoan oblong clay "bathtubs", which, because they were used in domestic as well as in funerary contexts, lacked the elaborate funerary imagery of the chests. In this article the term larnax is used exclusively to mean chest coffins.

destroyed by fire. In the succeeding Late Minoan II–IIIA1 period, Knossian influence seems to have become paramount on the island. Signs of Cretan contact with Egypt and Syria-Palestine rise sharply during this time.<sup>3</sup> For example, at the south-central Cretan port of Kommos, the number of imported Egyptian vases at this time reaches a peak, which may be a sign of direct contact between Crete and Egypt.<sup>4</sup> Nowhere is this Egyptian influence more obvious than in the area of funerary practice.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the simply furnished tombs of the preceding period, Late Minoan II–IIIA1 tombs include a profusion of rich grave goods imported from Egypt: scarabs, alabaster vases, lapis lazuli beads and figurines, and a faïence amulet.

One of the clearest introductions in these tombs is the wooden coffin which first appears in some LM II–IIIA1 graves around Knossos. Since these coffins are found in the Knossian “warrior graves”, thought to belong to Mycenaeans, they may have been brought to Crete from Mainland Greece, where they are known in earlier LH I contexts.<sup>6</sup> Since Crete, however, is likely to have had the most contact with Egypt in LM/LH I and Cretan influence on the Mycenaean Mainland was strong at this time,<sup>7</sup> it seems probable that the Mycenaeans learned about the wooden coffin through Crete. The absence of wooden coffins (as opposed to biers) in LM I Crete may then be attributed to the fact that so few graves from that period are known on the island. Found in a poor state of preservation, the LM II–IIIA1 coffins were rectangular, stood on four legs, and were about the same size as the later

<sup>3</sup> Egyptian imports found in Late Minoan IIIA1 Crete include a scarab of Queen Tiy from chamber tomb 5 at Agia Triada: R. Paribeni, “Ricerche nel sepolcreto di Hagia Triada presso Phaestos,” *MonAnt* 14, 1904 (cols. 677–756), col. 735; two alabaster vases from chamber tomb 4 at Kalyvia: L. Savignoni, “Scavi e scoperte nella necropoli di Phaestos,” *MonAnt* 14, 1904 (cols. 501–666), col. 554; eleven alabaster vases, a faïence amulet, lapis lazuli beads, and figurines from the Isopata tomb: A. Evans, “The Prehistoric Tombs of Knossos,” *Archaeologia* 59, 1905 (pp. 391–562), pl. LIX; two stone vases from tomb B at Katsamba: Alexiou, p. 46, pls. 10 and 11:a; a scarab of Amenophis III from Sellopoulo tomb 3: M. Popham, “Sellopoulo Tombs 3 and 4, Late Minoan Graves near Knossos,” *BSA* 59, 1974 (pp. 193–257), pp. 216–217. On this subject see E. Cline, “Amenhotep III and the Aegean: A Reassessment of Egypto-Aegean Relations in the 14th Century B.C.,” *Orientalia* 56, 1987, pp. 1–36.

<sup>4</sup> L. V. Watrous, “Late Minoan Kommos: Imported Pottery as Evidence for Foreign Contact,” *Scripta Mediterranea* 6, 1985, pp. 7–18; *idem*, *Kommos, III, The Late Bronze Age Pottery*, Princeton, in press, Chapter III, “Imported Pottery and Foreign Relations.”

<sup>5</sup> Cretan adaptation of Egyptian funerary practice in Late Minoan II–IIIA1 is not a new phenomenon. It can be detected as early as the Middle Minoan III period. The new architectural form of the Neopalatial Temple Tomb at Knossos imitates an Egyptian Middle Kingdom tomb type: Pini, p. 40. The wooden bier(s) known from the Middle Minoan III–Late Minoan I Poros tomb (K. Lembessi, «Ἀνασκαφή σπυλαϊόδους τάφους εἰς Πόρον Ἡρακλείου», *Πρακτικά* 1967 [1969], pp. 159–209) are probably related to similar carrying devices that occur in Egyptian tombs, e.g., N. Davis, *The Tomb of Antefaker, Vizier of Sesostri I and of his wife, Senet* (No. 60), London 1920, pl. 21; *idem*, *The Tomb of Rekhmire at Thebes*, New York 1973 (Arno Reprint), pl. 89.

<sup>6</sup> R. Hägg and F. Sieurin, “On the Origin of the Wooden Coffin in Late Bronze Age Greece,” *BSA* 77, 1982, pp. 175–186.

<sup>7</sup> Only Cretans are depicted on the tomb paintings of Senmut (1511–1480 B.C.), Puemre (1490–1480 B.C.), Useramon (ca. 1504–1450 B.C.), Rekhmire I (1504–1450), and Menheperesenb (1504–1450 B.C.). In addition, the Minoans seem to have played a central role in Aegean trade in the LM/LH I period. O. Dickinson (*The Origins of Mycenaean Civilization* [SIMA 49], Göteborg 1977, p. 107) discusses Cretan influence on the Mainland.

clay larnakes.<sup>8</sup> Little is known about their decoration; only fragments of red, blue, yellow, and white pigment, lumps of blue paste (kyanos), and carved details have been reported by excavators.<sup>9</sup> In addition, some of the coffins may have been decorated with raised panels of ivory carved with running spirals.<sup>10</sup>

## ORIGIN

The origin of these wooden coffins remains controversial. Rutkowski, who made an extensive study of this question, believed that they imitated Middle Minoan coffins.<sup>11</sup> Clay sarcophagi of the Middle Minoan period, however, are usually oblong and do not have legs or a gabled lid. Early excavators such as Xanthoudides argued that the larnakes were derived from wooden chests.<sup>12</sup> Evans thought that they were derived from Egyptian wooden funerary chests.<sup>13</sup> This latter argument, developed in detail below, has long been out of favor, in large part because during the last two decades scholars have tended to see minimal Egyptian influence in the Aegean. Most recently, Hägg and Sieurin have suggested that the Late Helladic wooden coffins on the Greek Mainland represent a continuation, in a portable form, of Middle Helladic cist graves.<sup>14</sup>

These Late Minoan Cretan coffins closely resemble a type of Egyptian linen chest that was a popular piece of funerary furniture in XVIIIth Dynasty tombs (e.g. Pl. 81:a–c). The Egyptian chests, also made of wood, were not coffins (except for the first example from Sedment, discussed below) but were originally articles of domestic furniture for the storage of linen, which were buried with the dead. By the 14th century B.C., the Egyptians had begun to decorate some of these chests with funerary scenes (Pl. 81:e) specifically for use in the grave. I am able to cite thirteen examples of these wooden chests found in XVIIIth Dynasty tombs: one from tomb 254 at Sedment (1500–1450 B.C.), eight from the tomb of the architect Cha and his wife Meryt at Deir el Medina (1397–1360 B.C.), and four from the tomb of Tutankhamen (1352–1343 B.C.).

The first example (Pl. 81:a), from Sedment, is an unadorned four-legged chest with a bifold lid that swung open on dowels recessed into sockets in the wooden frame. Measuring

<sup>8</sup> The best-preserved wooden example, from Katsambas, measured 0.60 m. in height, at least 1.08 m. in length, and 0.45 m. in width: Alexiou, pp. 6–9. The clay larnakes average about 0.60 m. in height, 1.00 m. in length, and 0.45 m. in width. C. Long (*The Ayia Triada Sarcophagus* [SIMA 41], Göteborg 1974, pp. 75–77) provides a list of larnakes with published measurements.

<sup>9</sup> Alexiou, pp. 8–10; Rutkowski, 1966 (footnote 2 above), p. 223; S. Hood, “Archaeology in Greece, 1958,” *AR* 1959, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., S. Hood, “Late Minoan Warrior-graves from Ayios Ioannis and the New Hospital Site near Knossos,” *BSA* 47, 1952 (pp. 243–277), p. 276, fig. 17 and pl. 54:d. In tomb 3, a fragmentary ivory panel carved with running spirals was found near the foot of a decomposed skeleton. The panel was made in such a way as to fit between two beveled wooden border strips and against a wooden backing. The excavator of the tomb suggested that the panel may have decorated a quiver, but it is possible that it was a border on a wooden coffin.

<sup>11</sup> Rutkowski, 1968 (footnote 2 above). Subsequent studies have seen little connection between the wooden larnakes and Middle Minoan coffins: Pini, p. 57; S. Hood, “Another Warrior-grave at Ayios Ioannis near Knossos,” *BSA* 51, 1956 (pp. 81–102), p. 87; Hägg and Sieurin (footnote 6 above), p. 182.

<sup>12</sup> S. Xanthoudides, «Ἐκ Κρήτης», *Δελτ* 3, 1904 (1905; pp. 1–56), pp. 10–12; *idem*, «Ἀρχαιολογική περιφέρεια (Κρήτης)», *Δελτ* 6, 1920–1921 (1923; pp. 154–163), p. 158.

<sup>13</sup> Evans (footnote 3 above), p. 399.

<sup>14</sup> Hägg and Sieurin (footnote 6 above).

1.50 m. in length, 0.56 m. in width, and 0.60 m. in height, the Sedment coffin is comparable in size to Cretan larnakes (cf. footnote 8 above). Like them, the chest was used as a coffin; it has a funerary inscription on its lid, unlike Cretan examples. The Sedment tomb also contained a miniature version of a funerary chest (Pl. 81:b) inlaid with checkerboard panels made of ebony and ivory inlay, a pattern duplicated on Cretan larnakes (Pl. 86:e).<sup>15</sup> Five of the Deir el Medina chests are polychrome, painted in blue, green, and white.<sup>16</sup> These chests (e.g. Pl. 81:c, d) are decorated with zigzag checkerboard panels, lotuses, and imitation inlay borders on their lids, and rosettes, stars, zigzags, and a checkerboard on their bodies. Painted on a single side of one example (Pl. 81:e) is a scene of Cha and his wife at a funerary banquet, a common depiction on Egyptian tombs and later funerary papyri. The decorative patterns on these chests imitate more expensive inlays of ebony, ivory, and colored paste. In Tutankhamen's tomb there were larnax-shaped chests, three plain and one decorated.<sup>17</sup> The latter (Pl. 81:f), which measures 0.83 m. in length, 0.60 m. in width, and 0.25 m. in height, is constructed with an ebony inscribed frame outlined by strips of ivory and ebony, with recessed inner panels of wood. Its four feet are capped with shoes of bronze, such as were found in Shaft Grave III at Mycenae.<sup>18</sup> One of the end panels is carved with a scene of the king making offerings to Osiris in the Afterworld. The chest is provided with four carrying poles, a feature imitated on a clay larnax from Agios Myron in Crete.<sup>19</sup> The similarities between the Egyptian chests and the Cretan coffins suggest that the Cretan coffins were directly derived from this type of Egyptian chest.

In the first quarter of the 14th century B.C., artists at Knossos began to make less expensive clay versions of the wooden coffins. Unlike their wooden predecessors, these clay chests have survived in good condition. The clay larnakes have a raised border, with inset panels on their bodies and on their gabled lids.<sup>20</sup> Imitation slatwork on a number of examples and rivet heads suggest that they were derived from wooden prototypes. Clay

<sup>15</sup> Sedment chest: W. Petrie and G. Brunton, *Sedment*, London 1924, II, pl. 55, no. 1972, lower left. Cretan larnax: Mavriyannaki, pp. 61–63 and pls. XIII–XVI. Two miniature wooden chests similar to the Sedment example are on display in the Louvre. The first has lotus petals and rosettes on its lid and an inscription on its body. The second has a frieze of alternating grape clusters and lotus blossoms on its lid and a row of running spirals on its body.

<sup>16</sup> E. Schiaparelli, *Relazione sui lavori della Missione Archeologica Italiana in Egitto (1903–1920)*, II, *La Tomba intatta dell'Architetto Cha*, Turin 1927, pp. 90–112. The Deir el Medina chests are smaller than the Sedment coffin; dimensions of the chest in Plate 81:c: length, 0.48; width, 0.33; height, 0.36 m. The dimensions of the other chests are not given but appear approximately the same.

<sup>17</sup> Tutankhamen's tomb also included a small wooden figure of the king in the guise of Osiris (King of the Underworld) set inside a miniature gabled wooden chest packed with linen: H. Carter, *The Tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amen III*, London 1933, pp. 84–86 and pl. XXIV; *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, Metropolitan Museum Exhibition catalogue, New York 1976, pp. 150–151. Inscriptions on the wooden chest indicate that the figure of the king and the chest were made by the overseer of the cemetery who sealed the grave. The figure of the king (only slightly smaller than the chest) measures 0.42 m. in length, 0.12 m. in width, and 0.043 m. in height. The three other examples also appear in *Treasures of Tutankhamun*, p. 29, nos. 315–317, pp. 108–109 and color pl. 7. Their measurements, based on the size of the boat model next to them, appear to be ca. 1.10 m. in length, 0.30 m. in width, and 0.40 m. in height.

<sup>18</sup> C. Long, "A Wooden Chest from the Third Shaft Grave," *AJA* 78, 1974, pp. 75–77.

<sup>19</sup> Kanta, pl. 7, no. 1.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., J. Hazzidakis et al., *Fouilles exécutées à Mallia (ÉtCrét 13)*, pls. 49:1 and 52:4; A. Karetsou, *Δελτ* 33, 1978, B' (1985), pp. 352–359, pl. 179:d from Agios Syllas.



larnakes commonly had two or more pairs of handles on their bodies and lids; other examples had pairs of holes in their rims and lids, like Egyptian chests, so that they could be secured by a cord. Holes were made in the bottoms of the larnakes, apparently to expedite the decomposition of the body. Larnakes have usually been found with the skeleton of the deceased in a flexed position.<sup>21</sup> Generally the contents of larnax burials are a few simple personal possessions and vases. In contrast, Tomb H, from Katsambas, one of the wealthier LM III graves, included a wide range of vases (Pl. 84:g), jewelry, ivory toilet articles, and gold and bronze items.<sup>22</sup> By the end of the 14th century, larnakes were in general use throughout Crete. Larnakes continued as the standard Cretan burial container until the beginning of Late Minoan IIIC, although most examples date to the Late Minoan IIIA2 and IIIB1 period.

### MOTIFS AND SCENES

The paintings on these larnakes can be considered in four partially overlapping groups: (1) abstract designs, (2) ritual figures (human and animal) and objects, (3) animals and plants sacred to a divinity, and (4) representations of the Afterworld.

#### *Abstract Designs*

Abstract designs or patterns are the commonest decoration on larnakes, painted on their panels, borders, and covers. Most popular are (1) spirals, (2) wavy lines (FM 53), (3) tricurved arch net, (4) rosette or quatrefoil pattern (Pl. 86:e), (5) checkerboard (FM 56; Pl. 86:e), (6) alternating multiple arcs (Pl. 85:b), and (7) wavy border (FM 65). Less common are (8) pendant loops (Pl. 88:f), (9) chevrons (FM 58), (10) curved stripes (FM 67; Pl. 86:e, lid), (11) lozenges (FM 73; Pl. 86:c, lid), (12) variegated stone or marbling (Pl. 86:f), and (13) crosshatching.<sup>23</sup> Some of the designs are clearly decorative, *viz.* nos. 4, 5, 6, 10–13; others, however, are ambiguous, for they may be shorthand or conventional renderings of naturalistic images. Spirals, for example, may run in horizontal (Pl. 84:a, b) or vertical bands (Pl. 83:a, c) or as an open field (Pl. 86:d). In various forms of Aegean art spirals were often used to indicate the sea.<sup>24</sup> This seems especially likely since spirals appear on larnakes in conjunction with other marine motifs and are used in the same manner. Single, double, or triple wavy lines indicating water may be horizontal or vertical (Pls. 89:d, 90:a). The multiple wavy line joined into a V at one end (Pl. 85:e) represents seaweed.<sup>25</sup> Horizontal zigzag lines (Pl. 84:a), similar to the symbol for water on Egyptian wall paintings, also seem to indicate water. The tricurved arch pattern (not to be confused with the common scale [FM 70], arcade [FM 62], or festoon pattern) usually runs horizontally and

<sup>21</sup> See Xanthoudides, *Δελτ* 3 (footnote 12 above), p. 2, fig. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Alexiou, pp. 51–58 and pls. 23–27.

<sup>23</sup> Motifs not illustrated here are chevrons: Mavriyannaki, pl. 8; crosshatching: F. Chapouthier and H. Gallet de Santerre, “Chronique de Fouilles en 1946 (Mallia),” *BCH* 71–72 (1947–1948), pp. 405–407 and fig. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, pp. 187–189.

<sup>25</sup> Other examples: S. Alexiou, *Δελτ* 25, 1970, B' 1 (1972), pp. 454–455 and pl. 397:b, g; S. Hood, G. Huxley, and N. Sandars, “A Minoan Cemetery on Upper Gypsades,” *BSA* 53–54, 1958–1959, pp. 194–262 and pl. 61:a.

may be inset with aquatic “bivalves” (Pls. 82:c, h, 84:d). This design can probably be interpreted as a marine pattern.<sup>26</sup>

The wavy border motif (Pls. 82:b, 90:e, f, 91:f) has similar connotations. Derived from the rocky ground line or border on marine compositions of MM III–LM I fresco and vase paintings, it appears on larnakes in conjunction with spirals or marine animals.<sup>27</sup> Certain designs are especially common on larnax borders: running spirals, the wavy border, curved stripes, rosettes, zigzags, and wavy lines. As will be discussed below, spirals, the wavy border, and wavy lines appear to have been employed on the borders of larnakes because they symbolized water. Practically all these designs have close parallels on contemporary Palace Style jars.<sup>28</sup> Certain designs on larnakes, on the other hand, such as rosettes and checkerboards, were decorative and meant to imitate splendid chests, real or imagined, ornamented with colored inlays and appliqués, in the manner of the Egyptian examples (Pl. 81).

### *Ritual Figures and Objects*

The second group of paintings on larnakes is drawn from Minoan cult. This group includes female figures performing ritual acts, bulls, bucrania, birds, double axes, horns of consecration, and altars.

The famous Agia Triada sarcophagus (Pl. 83:a, c), unique among larnakes in that it was painted by a fresco painter, is one of the earliest examples (LM IIIA2) bearing ritual scenes.<sup>29</sup> Made of limestone, the chest can only be paralleled in XVIIIth Dynasty Egypt where stone sarcophagi were carved for noble families.<sup>30</sup> Painted for a high-ranking Minoan, the Agia Triada sarcophagus illustrates the older Minoan painting tradition, naturalistic and narrative, that the artists of the clay larnakes drew upon and transformed (see p. 304 below). The front panel (Pl. 83:a) of the sarcophagus is divided into two scenes. On the right, three men offer what are probably models of calves and a boat to a deceased man who stands before the entrance to his tomb. On the left side of the panel, a procession of women approaches a krater set between two double axes on stands. The first woman makes a libation, probably to the deceased. The two processions are back to back and proceed outward, a scheme which separates the two scenes. The recipient is identified as deceased by his stiff, armless pose.<sup>31</sup> On the back (Pl. 83:c), a procession of women accompanies a

<sup>26</sup> Morgan (p. 189) has pointed out the association of the spiral with water-related motifs in Thera fresco painting and LM IB vase painting. See also *PM* II, p. 509, fig. 312:f.

<sup>27</sup> A. Furumark, *Mycenaean Pottery*, Stockholm 1972, pp. 143–144.

<sup>28</sup> Compare spirals on larnakes and M. Popham, *The Destruction of the Palace at Knossos* (*SIMA* 12), Göteborg 1970, pl. 5:d; wavy lines on larnakes and *ibid.*, pl. 5:a; tricurved arches on larnakes and *ibid.*, pl. 7:b; larnax checkerboard and *PM* IV, p. 348, fig. 291; curved stripes on larnakes and Popham, *op. cit.*, pl. 7:a. The comprehensive study of the Palace Style is now W.-D. Niemeier, *Die Palaststilkeramik von Knossos. Stil, Chronologie und historische Kontext*, Berlin 1984.

<sup>29</sup> See the thorough publication in Long (footnote 8 above).

<sup>30</sup> W. Hayes, *Royal Sarcophagi of the XVIIIth Dynasty*, Princeton 1935. Long ([footnote 8 above] p. 24) notes that the arrangement and type of border decoration on the Agia Triada sarcophagus are similar to those on Egyptian coffins. This is also true for examples from Armenoi (Pls. 87:e and 88:a).

<sup>31</sup> The Aegean idea of the deceased as an armless figure may have come from the anthropoid coffin, newly introduced in XVIIIth Dynasty Egypt. See A. Spencer, *Death in Ancient Egypt*, New York 1982, p. 175. This convention is also observed on Mycenaean kraters, VK, figs. III:2, III:16 and 18.

sacrifice of a bull and a libation at an altar. Each end panel features a pair of chariot-borne goddesses.

Long has pointed out how the ceremony depicted on the front seems to be made up of Mycenaean and Minoan details. The scene, however, is completely unparalleled in Aegean art. On the other hand, it does closely resemble two Egyptian funeral rites: (1) the standard procession of offering bearers, which is commonly shown on tombs, and (2) the mummified deceased receiving last rites before his tomb. The second scene is represented on the tomb of Nebamun and Ipuki, from the reign of Amenhotep III, 1397–1360 B.C.<sup>32</sup> While Long is certainly correct that none of the details on the sarcophagus can be paralleled exactly in contemporary Egyptian art, it does not necessarily follow that the scene is without Egyptian influence.<sup>33</sup> All the details in the scene can be understood as deriving from Egypt if one allows for the artistic translation of Egyptian elements to fit local Cretan requirements. Thus the Cretan offering bearers carry a calf model instead of an Egyptian leg of meat and a boat model instead of a funerary barque.<sup>34</sup> The platform and the tree, Cretan cult images, replace the Egyptian offering table and the bouquet. The armless figure in front of the tholos tomb takes the place of the Egyptian mummy set at the entrance of his tomb. The detailed similarities between the Egyptian scenes and the front of the Agia Triada sarcophagus might be explained if the Cretan and Egyptian funerary practice were similar.<sup>35</sup> It is also possible that the artist of the Agia Triada sarcophagus or his patron had actually seen a funeral in Egypt.

Female figures, mourners and goddesses, appear on at least four other larnakes. A LM IIIA larnax from Knossos (Pl. 82:f) shows two women on the front, spirals on the back, and a lily motif on the right short side (Pl. 82:g).<sup>36</sup> On the front of the larnax, the left-hand female raises her arms together, palms out, while the right-hand figure holds her arms up above her shoulders, the standard pose of Minoan goddesses.<sup>37</sup> Citing parallel gestures on Aegean rings and sealings, Morgan interprets these figures as votaries in a sacrificial procession moving toward the tree (lily motif) depicted on the right side of the larnax (Pl. 82:g). There are difficulties with this interpretation: the women probably do not carry anything, and the lily chain is not a tree.<sup>38</sup> It is simpler and more to the point to understand the two

<sup>32</sup> K. Lange and M. Hirmer, *Egypt*, New York 1968, pl. 28.

<sup>33</sup> Long ([footnote 8 above] pp. 44–53) discounts any possibility of foreign inspiration for an artistic motif or composition unless it literally imitates the original form. But, in antiquity, artistic motifs and schemes were often borrowed from one culture to another and in the process were transformed according to the needs of the local artist. H. Liebowitz illustrates this process in “The Impact of the Art of Egypt on the Art of Syria and Palestine,” in *Immortal Egypt*, D. Schmandt-Besserat, ed., Undena 1978, pp. 33–35. See also H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient*, London 1970, pp. 215, 223, 244, and 256.

<sup>34</sup> For a Minoan boat model see L. Banti, F. Halbherr, and E. Stefani, “Haghia Triada nel periodo tardo-palaziale,” *ASAtene*, n.s. 55, 1977 (1980; pp. 1–296), p. 90, fig. 56.

<sup>35</sup> Pini (p. 70) notes that there are places where such a ceremony could have been carried out in the tomb at Katsamba and in the Kephala and Royal Tomb at Knossos. Pini (p. 74) and Nilsson (*MMR*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 621–627) note the similarities between Cretan and Egyptian funerary ideas.

<sup>36</sup> Morgan.

<sup>37</sup> S. Alexiou, «Ἡ μινωϊκὴ θεὰ μεθ’ ὑψωμένον χεῖρων», *ΚρητΧρον* 12, 1958, pp. 179–299.

<sup>38</sup> Morgan, pp. 193–199. Morgan’s “vessel” in the upper right corner of the right panel has no parallels; almost certainly it is a voluted flower. The lily chain depicted on the right side of the larnax is a floral motif,

female figures as a mourner and a goddess depicted on the exterior for the consolation of the deceased inside the larnax. The left-hand woman lifts her arms in mourning, just as the mourners do on the contemporary tomb of Ramose in Thebes<sup>39</sup> and on later larnakes (see below). The right-hand figure, distinguished from her companion by her larger size, her pose, and by the bird above her head, is probably divine. The end panels (Pl. 91:b) on Middle and New Kingdom coffins, for example, often bear the protective goddesses Isis and Nephthys in a similar pose.<sup>40</sup> Egyptian divinities are also identified by means of attributes above their heads.

A poorly preserved figure in the same pose occurs on a Late Minoan IIIA2 larnax from Vathianos Kampos near Herakleion.<sup>41</sup> On the right side of the larnax a frontal figure in a diagonally striped robe raises her arms above her shoulders. The front (Pl. 84:h) of the larnax shows a large papyrus and an argonaut. On the side of a contemporary larnax from Armenoi another figure with upraised arms (Pl. 91:e) is depicted in the form of a terracotta idol. She is further evidence that the similar Knossos and Vathianos Kampos figures are probably goddesses. Another ritual scene, on an unpublished LM IIIB larnax from Pigi, represents a funeral. The scene is said to resemble the Mainland larnax from Tanagra that features mourning women and a bier.<sup>42</sup> The Minoan funeral scenes then can be taken as antecedents for similar representations on the later Mainland larnakes.

Bulls, an integral part of Minoan cult, are depicted on several larnakes along with religious symbols that probably identify the animals as intended sacrifices. Two bulls, surrounded by horns of consecration, are depicted on the front of a LM IIIA2 larnax from Armenoi (Pl. 88:b). The bull on the right has decorative patterns, rosettes, and quirks on it, in the fashion of sacrificial bull rhyta which are painted with nets or designs.<sup>43</sup> The side panel (Pl. 87:b) of this larnax shows a papyrus and a bull leaping over a horn of consecration and a double ax. The same combination of bulls and horns of consecration with double axes occurs on a second larnax and its lid from Armenoi (Pl. 88:a). Finally, on a LM IIIA2 larnax from Episkopi, a bull, bird, horns of consecration, and a double ax are set at the base of the left-hand panel, with another bull and two horns of consecration above (Pl. 85:d). The composition of the panel suggests that the lower three images were painted first and that the upper three symbols, which are repetitive, were then added to fill the space, for an emblematic effect. Bulls also appear as protomes on the lids of four larnakes from Episkopi,<sup>44</sup> and a

not a tree. The larnax painter could depict a tree, if desired. In addition, it is methodologically incorrect to interpret literally the poses in a larnax composition on the basis of non-funerary art.

<sup>39</sup> Illustrated in C. Wilkinson, "Egyptian Wall Paintings: The Metropolitan Museum's Collection of Facsimiles," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 36 (Spring, 1979), p. 29.

<sup>40</sup> A similar distinction between two female figures is observed on a Tanagra larnax: cf. Vermeule (footnote 2 above), pls. 25:b and 26:a. On the Agia Triada sarcophagus, the pairs of figures on the two sides are identified as goddesses by their beast-drawn chariots and the birds overhead.

<sup>41</sup> See Kanta, pp. 44–45; C. Zervos, *L'art de la Crète néolithique et minoenne*, Paris 1956, pls. 777 and 778.

<sup>42</sup> Kanta (p. 296) compares the Pigi larnax to an example from Tanagra (T. Spyropoulos, «'Ανασκαφή εἰς τὸ μυκηναϊκὸν νεκροταφεῖον τῆς Τανάγρας», *AAA* 3, 1970 [pp. 184–197], p. 195, fig. 15) which depicts mourning women in an upper register and two women leaning over a child(?) below on a bier or bed.

<sup>43</sup> Armenoi larnakes: J. Tzedakis, «Λάρνακες ὑστερομινωικὸν νεκροταφεῖον Ἀρμένων Ρεθύμνης», *AAA* 4, 1971, pp. 216–222. Bulls: see N. Marinatos, *Minoan Sacrificial Ritual*, Stockholm 1986, p. 31, figs. 19 and 20; Kanta, pl. 48, nos. 2 and 4.

<sup>44</sup> See Mavriyannaki, pp. 29–30, 56, and 86.

bucranium is painted on the lid (Pl. 84:f) of a larnax in the Rethymnon Museum.<sup>45</sup> The horns of consecration, double axes, and bucrania, which are part of the iconography of bull sacrifice on Minoan seals, imply that the bulls depicted on larnakes are understood as offerings for the deceased.<sup>46</sup>

Birds, regularly represented in Minoan cult assemblages, also appear on larnakes. Normally they are depicted with sacrificial images or with motifs of the Afterworld (pp. 296–301 below). On the Agia Triada sarcophagus, birds perched on double axes watch the bull sacrifice and libation (Pl. 83:a, b). This scene may be abbreviated, as on the LM IIIB Giofyrakia larnax (Pl. 91:c), which depicts a bird on top of a double ax set in horns of consecration. A similar scene on an early LM IIIB larnax from Mallia consists of a bird (that is difficult to see) on top of a double ax in a background of pendant spirals (Pl. 88:f). Since the bird is a regular attribute of the Minoan goddess with the upraised arms,<sup>47</sup> it may be that in these scenes it was understood either as the goddess changed into another form (as in *Odyssey* 1.320, 3.371, and 22.239) or as the goddess' representative. The presence of the bird implies that the goddess was aware of and would respond to the sacrifice.

Horns of consecration also appear as isolated motifs. Most frequently they are placed on the vertical frames of larnakes (Pl. 88:a, b) or in horizontal rows (Pl. 88:a). They also may be the main motif in a panel (Pls. 87:c, 90:b, c). In Neopalatial Crete, stone or clay horns of consecration were placed on the roofs of buildings and tombs and in shrines, probably as signs of the sanctity of the structure.<sup>48</sup> They are shown in the same manner in the scene on the back of the Agia Triada sarcophagus, lining the top of the altar (Pl. 83:c). Horns of consecration are also depicted sitting on a row of beam ends (Pl. 87:c) or a checkerboard wall (Pl. 82:c). The fact that this symbol occurs with architectural imagery on larnakes suggests that the Minoans may have conceived of the larnax as the house of the dead, just as the Egyptians did for the sarcophagus.<sup>49</sup> Altars, another feature of Minoan sacrificial rites, are represented on the sides of a larnax from Gazi (Pl. 91:a). It is also possible that isolated cult symbols on larnakes were intended to mark the sanctity of the coffin and to protect it.<sup>50</sup>

The lone griffin sniffing a papyrus on a LM IIIA2 larnax from Palaikastro (Pl. 82:a) may have the same apotropaic character, for it is a vase-painting-like imitation of the griffins which appeared on the wall of the Throne Room in the palace at Knossos where they served as protective guardians of the throne.<sup>51</sup> Horns of consecration may also have flowers as well as a double ax set between them (Pl. 90:a, left). On the Palaikastro larnax (Pl. 82:a) a clump of lilies grows out of an undulating ground line. The stem of the central lily has been fitted

<sup>45</sup> These protomes are interpreted as representing sacrificial animals: Mavriyannaki, p. 86 and Morgan, pp. 175–176.

<sup>46</sup> Marinatos (footnote 43 above), pp. 27–31 and *MMR*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 18–235.

<sup>47</sup> Gesell, p. 53 and *MMR*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 330–340.

<sup>48</sup> Gesell, p. 62.

<sup>49</sup> W. Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, Cambridge 1953, I, pp. 312–319. Beam ends are also used as a border motif on larnakes (e.g. Pl. 87:c, e–g), reinforcing the architectural analogy.

<sup>50</sup> Many of these motifs were also talismanic devices on Neopalatial sealstones: V. Kenna, *The Cretan Talismanic Stone in the Late Minoan Age* (*SIMA* 24), Göteborg 1969, pp. 26–32.

<sup>51</sup> *PM* IV, p. 921, fig. 895; Furumark (footnote 27 above), p. 199. Compare the Palaikastro griffin with the similar bird on the Late Minoan II vase from Katsamba in Alexiou, pl. 20.

with horns of consecration and a double ax. Similar lilies occur on house frescoes at Thera, Amnissos, and on LM IIIA Palace Style jars from Knossos.<sup>52</sup> A comparison of the Palaiakastro scene with the Theran Spring fresco is revealing: the fresco depicts the springtime naturalistically by including mating swallows and blossoming lilies, while the larnax combines a lily and ritual symbol to express the religious concept of regeneration.

### *Animals and Plants Sacred to a Divinity*

The third group of paintings on larnakes consists of traditional Minoan motifs drawn from the natural world: octopodes, dolphins, argonauts, bivalves, secondary marine motifs (seaweed, rockwork, and starfish), snakes, and flowers.

The octopus is the most popular sea creature in this group. Depicted in the schematized form also found on kraters (Pl. 88:e), it has an attenuated body, large eyes, and symmetrical tentacles set emblematically.<sup>53</sup> An important motif, the octopus usually occupies a panel by itself (Pls. 86:a, b, 90:a); a pair of octopodes may cover the front of a coffin (Pl. 83:d). At times a single large example dominates the entire side of a larnax, a composition which is also popular on bathtubs.<sup>54</sup> Argonauts are the next most numerous sea animal on larnakes. Monumentalized examples often fill the long side of a coffin.<sup>55</sup> A gigantic argonaut and a massive papyrus spread across the front of a larnax from Vathianos Kampos (Pl. 84:h). More often, however, the creature is a small motif within a larger composition. On a late LM IIIA2 larnax from Tzigounas a line of argonauts seems to crawl along the bottom and top of the coffin's façade creating a watery spiral pattern (Pl. 85:a). They appear with other marine creatures, such as fish (Pl. 89:e) and birds (Pl. 89:c), suggesting a seascape. Argonauts may also be juxtaposed with land flora, such as flowers (Pl. 89:e). On a LM IIIA2 larnax from Armenoi (Pl. 87:f) they frame a deer hunt in a landscape. Here they probably provide the context within which the scene is to be understood: the argonaut tells us that this scene (see p. 299 below) takes place across the sea, in the Afterworld.

Fish on early LM III larnakes (Pl. 82:b) resemble dolphins, from which they are descended artistically.<sup>56</sup> In time, they become generic (Pls. 89:c, 90:e, 91:f). They may be the main motif in a panel, swimming among sea anemones (Pl. 82:b) or crossed in a heraldic fashion (Pl. 85:c, e). They may also play a secondary role, as determinatives signifying a marshy (Pl. 83:f) or aquatic world (Pl. 90:e). "Bivalves", more common on bathtubs (Pl. 85:f), are another marine motif. Called a bivalve because of its resemblance to the cockle shell, this motif is probably better identified as the concentrically striated seaweed (*Padina pavonia*) that grows commonly along Aegean shores.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> For the Palace Style jars see *PM* IV, p. 326, fig. 268 and p. 331, fig. 273.

<sup>53</sup> Similar octopodes appear on other LM III kraters and on stirrup jars: Kanta, pl. 6, no. 9 and pl. 36, no. 5.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. Kanta, pl. 55, no. 9.

<sup>55</sup> See an example from Knossos (J. Forsdyke, "The Mavro Spelio Cemetery at Knossos," *BSA* 28, 1926–1927 [pp. 243–296], p. 271, fig. 26) and one in the Rethymnon Museum (S. Alexiou, *Δελτ* 21, 1966, B' 1 [1968], pp. 405–419, pl. 432:b).

<sup>56</sup> Dolphins also appear on a lid from Messi in the Rethymnon Museum: Mavriyannaki, pl. 12. Contemporary dolphins on a fresco from Knossos: *PM* I, p. 542, fig. 394 and on a Palace Style jar: *PM* IV, p. 304, fig. 239.

<sup>57</sup> Furumark ([footnote 27 above] pp. 312–315) calls the motif a "bivalve". See R. Redi, *Fauna und Flora des Mittelmeeres*, Berlin 1983, pl. 12 for the Aegean seaweed *Padina pavonia*, identified by H. Blitzer. This

A snake appears with a flower on the right end of the LM IIIB larnax lid from Kavrochori (Pl. 90:a, left). Rare in Aegean art, the snake on this larnax has probably been derived from cult, where it is a common attribute of the “goddess with the upraised arms”.<sup>58</sup>

The flowers depicted on larnakes are the lily, the “Minoan flower”, and its variants. Lilies, strung in a vertical band, appear on the sides of larnakes from Knossos (Pl. 82:g), Rethymnon (Pl. 84:c), and on the front of an example from Episkopi (Pl. 85:d). On the Palaikastro larnax (Pl. 82:a), a lily grows out of horns of consecration and supports a double ax. In this context, the lily is interchangeable with the Minoan flower (Pl. 90:a, left).<sup>59</sup> This combination can be taken to signify that sacrifice (horns of consecration and double ax) produces regeneration (flowers). Like the floral landscape on the Thera Spring fresco, the lily on the Knossos larnax (Pl. 82:g) probably symbolizes regeneration. On other larnakes, the “Minoan flower” (a Minoan vase painter’s creation) consists of a stem, two petals, pistil, and stamen (Pls. 87:e, 92:g).<sup>60</sup> Occasionally the type of giant blossoms typical of Palace Style jars (Pl. 88:d) appears on larnakes (Pls. 83:b, 86:c). Flowers also appear alone, in conjunction with other motifs, or as part of a large composition. Rows of this motif (Pl. 92:c) create a field of flowers. Often flowers are combined with palms (Pl. 92:h) and papyri. They also form the central motif between antithetical birds (Pls. 84:c, 87:c, 91:d). Goats regularly eat floral growths (Pls. 87:e, f, 92:a, 93:c). Finally, flowers appear as ancillary motifs in scenes with chariots (Pl. 89:c), ships (Pl. 90:e), and hunting (Pl. 89:b).

This group of motifs is probably just as religious as the group of ritual images considered earlier. The ubiquity of naturalistic motifs in Cretan fresco and vase painting has obscured the fact that they are also concentrated in Minoan religious contexts. The floors of shrines were decorated with marine life.<sup>61</sup> Representations of marine objects made in faïence, clay, and stone, such as argonauts, shells, flying fish, and rockwork, have been found in shrines, foundation deposits, and tombs.<sup>62</sup> As noted above, snakes and flowers are carried by or worn on Minoan figurines of goddesses. These objects were apparently considered the attributes of or appropriate votives for the “goddess with upraised arms”.<sup>63</sup> Citing recurrent assemblages of such motifs and cult objects, recent scholars of Minoan religion

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seaweed appears on an unpublished larnax from Athanatoi in the Herakleion Museum: N. Platon, «‘Η ἀρχαιολογική κίνησις ἐν Κρήτῃ κατὰ τὸ ἔτος 1957», *ΚρητΧρον* 11, 1957, p. 335.

<sup>58</sup> Gesell, pp. 62–63.

<sup>59</sup> In cult, both lilies and other flowers are associated with the Minoan goddess with the upraised arms: Gesell, pp. 12, 17, 36, 87, and 139–140.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. M. Popham, *The Minoan Unexplored Mansion*, Oxford 1984, pl. 174, no. 1, bottom.

<sup>61</sup> Fresco floor at Agia Triada: L. Banti, “I Culti minoici e greci di Hagia Triada (Creta),” *ASAtene*, n.s. 3–4, 1941–1942 (pp. 10–74), pp. 29–40; at Knossos: R. Koehl, “A Marinescape from the Palace at Knossos,” *AJA* 90, 1986, pp. 407–417. See P. Mountjoy, “Ritual Associations for LMIB Marine Style Vases,” *L’iconographie minoenne* (*BCH* Suppl. 11), Paris 1985, pp. 231–242.

<sup>62</sup> At Knossos: *PM* I, pp. 219–228, 517–522; III, p. 823; at Zakros: N. Platon, *Zakros*, New York 1971, p. 220. Tritons: *MMR*<sup>2</sup>, p. 154, note 78 lists those found in Minoan tombs; see R. Hägg and N. Marinatos, *Sanctuaries and Cults in the Aegean Bronze Age*, Stockholm 1981, p. 169 for tritons in a domestic context at Myrtos. Models of fish dedicated at a peak sanctuary: C. Davaras, *Guide to Cretan Antiquities*, Park Ridge, New Jersey 1976, p. 97, fig. 55. Marine style vases from shrines: Platon, *op. cit.*, pp. 121 and 123 and P. Warren, “Knossos: Stratigraphical Museum Excavations, 1978–1980. Part I,” *AR* 1980–1981 (pp. 73–92), p. 85, figs. 40 and 41. This list is not exhaustive.

<sup>63</sup> See *PM* II, pp. 249–252; *MMR*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 389–395; Alexiou.

have hypothesized the existence of a maternal goddess who looks after mankind and all living things.<sup>64</sup> In Crete this goddess seems to have been worshipped in houses, palaces, and at peak sanctuaries. The types of cult objects associated with her and the representations of her in tombs imply that she also was concerned with fertility and the Afterworld. In this respect, this deity resembles the Near Eastern goddess Asherah who, as the Mother of the Gods and of all creatures on earth and Mistress of the Sea, protected her offspring.<sup>65</sup> The parallelism of motifs painted on larnakes and found in Minoan cult suggests that the larnax motifs were associated with this Minoan goddess and that they were depicted on larnakes to place the deceased under her protection.

### *Representations of the Afterworld*

The final group of paintings on larnakes (Nilotic motifs, ships, hunting of deer, wild goat, and bull, and the chariot departure) refers to the Afterworld.

Thought not Aegean in origin, Nilotic motifs, waterfowl, papyri, and palms, are especially popular on larnakes. One of the earliest larnakes with these features, a mid-14th-century example from Vasiliki Anogeia (Pl. 83:f), shows a Nilotic landscape on its front. Four waterfowl sit on a large clump of papyri. Fish nose about the plants. The lid repeats the scene in a simpler form: a row of birds and fish. The symmetrical composition of the papyrus and the outsized frond are reminiscent of Palace Style compositions (Pl. 88:c).<sup>66</sup> Later larnakes (e.g. Pl. 91:f) show a schematized version of this scene. Antithetical birds, a variation on this theme, are common as a single motif on a panel. Birds may peck at a central palm (Pls. 84:e, 87:a) or flower (Pl. 87:g, 91:d). Palms (Pls. 83:b, 86:e, 92:i) and flowers (Pl. 92:h) are favorite motifs on the sides of larnakes. The Nilotic landscape often appears in other abbreviated forms. A LM IIIA2 larnax from Knossos, for instance, depicts a row of papyri on its front (Pl. 84:a, left).<sup>67</sup> A LM IIIB larnax from Gazi (Pl. 92:d) and one in the Agios Nikolaos Museum (Pl. 83:e) are painted with a row of date palms (Pl. 92:d).<sup>68</sup> A single palm framed by tiny flowers and seaweed borders (Pl. 90:d) appears on a LM IIIB lid from Gazi. While palms with thick, arched, and drooping branches (FM 14) are a motif on Minoan frescoes, Palace Style jars, and rhyta, the type of palm with a crown of three branches (FM 15) on the Gazi larnakes is not a traditional Minoan motif.<sup>69</sup> Palms or flowers often

<sup>64</sup> Gesell, pp. 64–65.

<sup>65</sup> In some Near Eastern cosmogonies, the world was thought of as having been born from the sea, and thus the mother who gave birth to heaven and earth was a sea goddess: M. Astour, *Hellenosemetica*, Leiden 1965, pp. 124–126. In her syncretized form, Asherah was represented as standing on a lion and holding snakes or lotus blossoms: *The Ancient Near East*, J. Pritchard, ed., Princeton 1969, p. 12, fig. 830.

<sup>66</sup> Nilotic scenes of marsh papyri and ducks also occur on Palace Style jars at Knossos: *PM IV*, pp. 305–310. The alabastra from the Kalyvia tomb carry miniature scenes similar to that on the Vasiliki Anogeia larnax: Savignoni (footnote 3 above), cols. 567–577, pls. 36 and 37.

<sup>67</sup> A similar composition appears on a Palace Style jar from the Royal Tomb (Isopata) at Knossos: *PM IV*, p. 327, fig. 270.

<sup>68</sup> For the date palm, see H. Vedel, *Trees and Shrubs of the Mediterranean*, New York 1978, p. 106 and A. Zachari, *Tà dáση τῆς Κρήτης*, Athens 1977, pp. 55–56.

<sup>69</sup> Furumark ([footnote 27 above] p. 278) points out that the latter type of palm is common in Near Eastern and Egyptian art (often as a symbol of life after death) but is not usually found in Aegean art before ca. 1350 B.C. For the symbolism of the palm, see H. Danthine, *Le palmier-dattier et les arbres sacrés*, Paris 1937. L. Morgan (*The Miniature Wall Paintings of Thera*, Cambridge 1988, p. 28) also points out the eschatological symbolism of the palm.



occur on the ends of the larnakes (Pls. 89:a, 92:g, h). On late larnakes the floral landscape may be transformed into an exuberant decoration (Pls. 89:d, 90:b, c).

Nilotic landscapes and motifs were used to mean different things by Aegean artists. In the West House at Thera, for example, the Aegean landscapes on the south wall are carefully differentiated from the Nilotic landscape on the east wall. The Aegean landscapes have mountains, pines, and in the distance, lions chasing deer.<sup>70</sup> On the east wall the flat, riverine landscape has wildcats chasing waterfowl and griffins pursuing deer among palms and papyri. The artist made the Nilotic character of the landscape apparent by filling it with flora and fauna atypical of the Aegean (palms, papyri, wildcats, Nile geese) and fabulous elements (griffins). This purely Nilotic landscape probably represents a faraway and exotic land.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, Aegean artists employed individual Nilotic motifs in different ways. On the "violent" Vapheio cup, for instance, the palm tree was combined with olive trees to depict what was probably meant as an Aegean landscape.<sup>72</sup> In other cases, however, the artistic context of the palm motif suggests that it was to be understood as exotic flora or a religious symbol of everlasting life.<sup>73</sup> Toward the end of the 15th century other individual Nilotic motifs, such as papyri and waterfowl, become part of the Palace Style repertory,<sup>74</sup> which also featured Minoan motifs of marine life, flora, and luxurious ornamentation. Painted with imagery drawn from the wall paintings of metropolitan Knossos, these vases were intended as prestigious decoration for the villas around the palace at Knossos and as export items for elsewhere on Crete and overseas, much in the same way that wealthy Greek houses throughout the Ottoman Empire were painted with similar views of Constantinople, scenes of garden flora, and harbors.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>70</sup> For a detailed treatment of this fresco, see Morgan, *op. cit.* The Spring fresco on Thera and the Caravanserai scenes feature local lilies, swallows, reeds, partridges, and hoopoes, and so are also probably intended as Aegean landscapes.

<sup>71</sup> See E. Davis, "The Iconography of the Ship Fresco from Thera," in *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography*, W. Moon, ed., Madison 1983 (pp. 3–14), pp. 5–6 and note 18; *PM* IV, pp. 336–337 (*pace* Morgan [footnote 69 above], pp. 21–44). Davis also notes that the papyri were conventionally rendered as if the artist followed Minoan artistic formula, rather than personal observation. The extraordinary nature of Nilotic landscapes is also indicated by the fact that they feature fantastic beasts (e.g. the Knossos Throne Room fresco with griffins).

<sup>72</sup> See E. Davis, "The Vapheio Cups: One Minoan and One Mycenaean?" *ArtB* 1974 (pp. 472–487), p. 485 on the naturalism of the palm trees depicted on the "violent" Vapheio cup.

<sup>73</sup> Of all Minoan vases, only rhyta are commonly painted with palms (e.g., *PM* II, p. 497, fig. 302; J. Shaw, "Excavations at Kommos (Crete) During 1976," *Hesperia* 46, 1977, pl. 53:b, c). Evans (*PM* I, pp. 494–495) believed that the palm, an exotic motif, appeared on rhyta because of the vase's Egyptian origin. N. Marinatos ("The Date Palm in Minoan Iconography and Religion," *OpAth* 15, 1984, pp. 115–122) infers that the palm motif in Minoan art symbolizes fertility and procreation (*contra MMR*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 284–285), since it most often appears with other religious motifs (altars, horns of consecration, demons, sacrifices, and goddesses) on seals and frescoes.

<sup>74</sup> See *PM* IV, pp. 322–336. These Palace Style jars feature abbreviated versions of Minoan landscape paintings. Morgan ([footnote 69 above] pp. 39–40) suggests that Late Minoan I landscapes (such as the frieze from the House of the Frescoes) that combine Aegean and Nilotic flora and fauna may have been inspired by actual Minoan gardens planted with imported flora.

<sup>75</sup> For Palace Style jars exported to the Mainland, see W.-D. Niemeier, "Zum Problem von Import und Imitation minoischer Keramik in frühmykenischen Zeit," in *Aux origines de l'hellénisme*, Paris 1984, pp. 111–119.

I have seen Ottoman-period paintings of this type in houses in Ambelakia (near Larissa), Kastoria (in northern Greece), Siatista (near Kozani), Herakleion (on Crete, now in the Historical Museum of Herakleion), and Birgi (near Izmir in Turkey). The Ambelakia scenes are published in G. Prokobas, *Ambelakia*,

With the appearance of the painted larnakes in the early 14th century B.C., abbreviated versions of Nilotic landscapes, luxuriant rows of palms, papyri and flowers, and hosts of delectable birds and fish, are depicted on them and on funerary vases, such as amphoroid kraters and alabastra. These abbreviated versions resemble conventional details on Egyptian wall paintings. The composition on the LM IIIA2 Vasiliki larnax, a clump of papyrus with fish below and waterfowl above (Pl. 83:f), does not occur in contemporary Aegean art. It does, however, recall the formulaic Nilotic setting in the popular fowling scene in Egyptian tomb painting.<sup>76</sup> Rows of palms, or papyri and flowers, figured prominently in the deceased's garden in Egyptian tombs (Pl. 93:e). Date palms, for example, are commonly painted on the XVIIIth Dynasty tombs,<sup>77</sup> and funerary inscriptions speak of the pleasure which the deceased took in his palm-covered garden.<sup>78</sup> In Egypt it was the conventional wish of the dead to be able to enjoy the pleasures of life in the hereafter, notably in hunting ducks and fish along the papyrus-lined Nile. During the XVIIIth Dynasty this notion was supplemented by the belief that the deceased went to the Land of the Blessed, also called the Field of Reeds, conceived of as an island in a river where fresh water, palms, papyri, fruits, and fertile fields would produce an eternal life of plenty (Pl. 93:e).<sup>79</sup> The similarities between the Egyptian and Cretan conceptions are quite close, suggesting that the inspiration for the Nilotic representations of the Afterworld on Minoan larnakes was probably Egyptian.<sup>80</sup>

Other larnakes make their eschatological vision more explicit by adding a ship to the Nilotic landscape. On a LM IIIB larnax from Gazi (Pl. 90:e) a ship sails over spirally waves, while a bird in the foreground pecks at a papyroid plant and a fish swims near by in the water. The Nilotic context indicates that the schematized Minoan vessel is to be understood as the funerary barque, like examples on Egyptian tomb paintings, which will transport the deceased to the Afterworld.<sup>81</sup> As one might expect, the Minoans did not envision that the soul crossed a river in the Egyptian fashion but rather that it journeyed across the sea to the Afterworld. This idea resurfaces in later Greek literature. Menelaus (*Odyssey*, 4.563–568) is told that upon his death the gods will carry him to the Elysian Plain at the ends of the earth, where the Cretan Rhadymanthus rules and life is easy for men. In Hesiod's *Works and Days* 170–173, certain of the generation of heroes were settled by Zeus:

Athens 1982 and A. Diamantopoulou, *Ambelakia* (Greek Traditional Architecture Series), Athens 1987, p. 19, fig. 26; p. 24, figs. 38, 39 (Constantinople); p. 35, figs. 72, 73 (floral motifs).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. C. Aldred, *Egyptian Art*, New York 1980, p. 161, fig. 124 (Tomb of Menna at Thebes).

<sup>77</sup> They begin as early as the reign of Tutmosis I (1526–1508 B.C.) and by the end of the XVIIIth Dynasty are one of the principal features in representations of the Afterworld: I. Wallert, *Die Palmen in Ägypten*, Berlin 1962, pp. 82–90, 129–133.

<sup>78</sup> From Theban tomb 76 (*ibid.*, p. 87):

His heart is happy to be able to refresh himself under his trees, and to take a walk in his tree-covered garden, and to pluck papyri and lotuses, dates, figs and grapes from his trees. They stir before him.

They give him nourishment.

<sup>79</sup> E. Vermeule (*Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*, Berkeley 1979, pp. 69–80) summarizes the evidence for this idea.

<sup>80</sup> Vermeule (*op. cit.*, p. 228, note 51) denies that the Cretan larnakes show any concept of a paradise or Elysian fields, but see *MMR*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 624–627 and Pini, p. 70.

<sup>81</sup> S. Alexiou, «Λάρνακες και ἀγγελία ἐκ τάφου παρὰ τὸ Γάζι Ἡρακλείου», *Ἀρχ'Εφ* 1972, pp. 86–98. For a ship in Egyptian tomb painting, see, for example, A. Mekhitarian, *Egyptian Painting*, New York 1954, plate on p. 80, from the Theban tomb of Menna.

... in faraway lands next to deep-eddying Ocean.  
 Blessed heroes, for whom honey-sweet crops  
 Blossomed three times a year, born by wheat-giving fields.

Larnakes not only depicted visions of the Afterworld but how the deceased would enjoy himself there. Hunting was a prime pastime to look forward to. A late LM IIIA2 larnax from Armenoi (Pl. 87:f) shows a hunter pursuing a deer on its left panel and a goat and her young on the right panel. On the left a hunter, wearing a sword and holding a leashed dog at his heel, carries a spear and chases a deer that flees toward an arcade pattern which may represent a forest (i.e., three trees seen aerially as in Egyptian painting).<sup>82</sup> An argonaut at the bottom of the composition probably indicates that this event is taking place beyond the water, that is, in the Afterworld. Thus the scene may be interpreted as the deceased hunting in the Afterworld. Running spirals and wavy lines on the panel frames and antithetical birds on the side panel (Pl. 87:g) also imply an overseas setting for the scenes. Scenes of deer hunting were not common in Minoan art: this is the earliest known example.<sup>83</sup> Depictions of deer hunting were more popular on the Mainland,<sup>84</sup> but the closest parallels are in Old and Middle Kingdom tomb paintings, which we know were open to visitors during the XVIIIth Dynasty.<sup>85</sup> In both the Egyptian and the Armenoi scenes a hunter with a leashed dog at his heel stands to one side of his quarry while the hunted deer and goats and their young flee into a landscape dotted with vegetation.<sup>86</sup>

On the right-hand panel of the Armenoi larnax a wild goat and her kid are provided with a flower and argonaut, motifs associated with the Afterworld, but the scene lacks a hunter. Another larnax from Armenoi (Pl. 87:e) painted by the same artist shows variations of the same theme: goat, flower, and argonaut in the left-hand panel, and bull, flower, and argonaut in the right-hand panel. Here, however, no hunter is depicted, and the side panel is painted with horns of consecration and a double ax (Pl. 87:c). The motifs on the lid, horns of consecration, a double ax, and floral petals, repeat the dual theme of the side panels: they may imply that the deer and bull (as sacrifices) will be present in the Afterworld, a standard idea in Egyptian tomb painting. The rear panel (Pl. 89:e) of a LM IIIB larnax from Kavrochori in central Crete is painted with antithetical goats above a central palm tree, accompanied by sets of flowers and argonauts and framed by wavy lines on both borders. The antithetical composition of the palm and goats, which also occurs on a LM IIIB

<sup>82</sup> E.g., the garden scene in the tomb of Rekhmire, illustrated in K. Michalowsky, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, New York 1969, endpaper.

<sup>83</sup> Scenes of deer sacrifice, however, do occur in Minoan art: on a fresco from Agia Triada (R. Paribeni, "Il Sarcophago dipinto di Haghia Triada," *MonAnt* 19, 1908–1910 [pp. 5–86], p. 72, fig. 22) and on a seal (Marinatos [footnote 43 above], p. 45, fig. 32).

<sup>84</sup> Fresco fragments of a deer hunt from Kea: K. Abramowitz, "Frescoes from Ayia Irini, Keos. Parts II–IV," *Hesperia* 49, 1980 (pp. 57–85), pl. 6:d; a ring from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae: *CMS* I, no. 15.

<sup>85</sup> C. Aldred ("Tradition and Revolution in the Art of the Eighteenth Dynasty," in *Immortal Egypt*, D. Schmandt-Besserat, ed., Undena 1978, pp. 51–62) documents the extensive copying of Old and Middle Kingdom tomb painting and sculpture by XVIIIth Dynasty Egyptian artists.

<sup>86</sup> See W. Stevenson Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, New York 1981, p. 249, fig. 245 and p. 345, fig. 334.

funerary krater (Pl. 87:d), resembles the eastern "Tree of Life" motif,<sup>87</sup> suggesting that it is intended as a religious symbol.

Other bull hunts look like dramatized versions of the traditional bull sacrifice; they seem to stress the action and man's role in it.<sup>88</sup> On a Late Minoan IIIB larnax from Armenoi (Pl. 92:a) three men hunt bulls, or rather cows, since each animal is provided with a suckling calf.<sup>89</sup> Both animals at the top of the panel have been wounded by spears. Above them a man flings two nets. In the center of the panel a robed man grips what is probably a noose, attached to the animal on the left. A second man in the lower right corner brandishes a double ax. Below him a goat and her young next to a schematized flower may be understood as future victims. Hatched loops representing an undulating ground line extend around the sides of the panel to create an aerial perspective. Thus the bird at the bottom of the panel is upside down, and the net-throwing figure at the top is tilted horizontally. The wounded animals have outsized missiles protruding from their backs, a detail found also in Egyptian hunt scenes.<sup>90</sup> Ritual details on the larnax, the double ax, birds, and the horns of consecration and double axes on the lid and back (Pl. 92:b, e), are clues that this scene may be understood primarily as a sacrificial act. Another version appears on the side panel of a LM IIIB larnax from Maroulas (Pl. 89:b). A hunter, having speared a bull, attempts to tie a rope around its neck to lead it to sacrifice. The floral arcs emanating from the bull may mark it as a sacrificial victim. In Minoan cult practice, the hunting of a bull led directly to its sacrifice, and consequently bull hunting and sacrifice seem to have been viewed as connected events in representations.<sup>91</sup> Thus some larnakes show the hunt, and others (Pl. 83:c) depict the sacrifice.

Scenes of wild-goat hunts appear for the first time on Late Minoan IIIB larnakes. On the often illustrated Episkopi larnax (Pl. 93:a–d) eight of the ten panels depict goat hunts. Spearman with the aid of their hunting dogs run down their quarry, or the dogs alone leap on the animals' backs, tear at their stomachs, or bite their tails, just as hunting dogs do in Egyptian tomb paintings.<sup>92</sup> A Mycenaean pictorial krater from Cyprus also depicts a spearman with curly-tailed hunting dogs who jump on the back of their prey, a scene similar to that on the right rear panel of the Episkopi larnax (Pl. 93:c).<sup>93</sup> The Episkopi hunting dogs are shown in pairs above the quarry's back on two panels (Pl. 93:a, c), a curious arrangement paralleled in an early XVIIIth Dynasty tomb painting.<sup>94</sup> On the left front panel of the

<sup>87</sup> On the sacred tree, see Frankfort (footnote 33 above), pp. 135–137 and 141–142. See also the references in footnote 69 above.

<sup>88</sup> Bull sacrifice appears often in Minoan art. See I. Sakellarakis, "Das Kuppelgrab A von Archanes und das kretisch-mykenische Tierferritual," *PZ* 45, 1970 (pp. 135–219), pp. 157–198.

<sup>89</sup> Tzedakis (footnote 43 above), pp. 218–220 and fig. 4.

<sup>90</sup> Smith (footnote 86 above), p. 249, fig. 245.

<sup>91</sup> For example, a Cretan seal (Marinatos [footnote 43 above], p. 29, fig. 18) depicts a speared bull on one side and the symbols of a sacrifice and libation on the other. Another Cretan seal (*ibid.*, p. 43, pl. 25) shows both a hunter stabbing a wild goat and a bucranium.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Smith (footnote 86 above), p. 249, fig. 245 (early XVIIIth Dynasty) and p. 345, fig. 334 (Tutankhamen). Catherine Vanderpool has pointed out to me that this type of curly-tailed dog is a benji, the royal hunting dog of Egypt.

<sup>93</sup> VK, pl. V:60.

<sup>94</sup> Smith (footnote 86 above), p. 249, fig. 245.

lid, a hunting dog has been substituted for the traditional kid (Pl. 93:a). Flowers and palms probably imply that these scenes represent the deceased hunting in the Afterworld.

A new scene, the departure of the deceased in a chariot, appears on Late Minoan IIIB larnakes, probably an introduction from Mycenaean pictorial art.<sup>95</sup> The front panel of a larnax from Kavrochori (Pl. 89:c) features a large bird on a palm tree facing a chariot and its team of two horses, with a fish, flower, and argonaut arranged around its margins. A branchless palm and wavy lines frame the composition. The chariot, an Egyptian type, is shown in aerial perspective.<sup>96</sup> Juxtaposed to marine creatures, the chariot is meant to transport the soul across the sea to the Afterworld represented by the palm tree and bird. The end panels, painted with an octopus, fish, and wavy lines, refer to the journey across the sea. On the lid panels, the contrast between the regions is maintained by combining sea creatures with Nilotic birds and flowers. The idea that the deceased will travel to the Afterworld in a chariot, rather than in a boat, is probably Mycenaean, since the scene first appears on pictorial kraters in Late Helladic IIIA1 and continues as a favored theme on these vases through the Late Helladic IIIB period.<sup>97</sup> Wedded to marine imagery, the Cretan painter of the Kavrochori larnax delineates the sea by means of concrete images, rather than the more abstract wavy-lined borders and tricurved arches used by the Mycenaean artist.

On the front panel of the larnax from Episkopi (Pl. 93:a), a chariot with three riders moves to the right watched by three figures in the rear. In contrast to the Kavrochori scheme, the chariot on the Episkopi larnax is actually shown traveling over the top of an octopus and a line of Y's (FM 45) which indicate water.<sup>98</sup> The chariot's journey will be overseas. Two of the chariot figures hold what are probably parasols.<sup>99</sup> As on the Kavrochori larnax, the chariot seems to be shown from an aerial perspective, although the riders are depicted frontally. The three rear figures hold kylikes, as in a final meal, and are shown frontally with upraised arms in a gesture of grief or farewell.<sup>100</sup> All the figures have speckled white interiors, as do the figures on Mycenaean kraters.<sup>101</sup> A man in the border between the two panels appears to lead the chariot in a manner reminiscent of the "groom" in krater scenes.<sup>102</sup> On the right panel, another figure holding a parasol, a kylix, and the halter of a mare watches the departure. The mare (which is also tied to the handle above) may represent a sacrificial victim, like other leashed animals. The Episkopi panels look like a Cretan version of the Mycenaean funerary concept<sup>103</sup> in which the deceased rides in his chariot to the Afterworld.

<sup>95</sup> VK, *passim*. Given the prevalence of the scene of a chariot rider in association with water motifs in LH III funerary art, it is tempting to see the concept of the deceased riding his chariot to or in an overseas afterworld as already present in LH I Greece, e.g., in the scene on Stele V from Shaft Grave V at Mycenae.

<sup>96</sup> G. Rethymniotakis, «*Λάρνακες καὶ ἀγγεῖα ἀπὸ τὸ Καβροχώρι Ἑρακλείου*», *Δελτ* 34, 1979, A' (1986; pp. 228–258), p. 254.

<sup>97</sup> VK, pl. III:2, 6, 13, 16.

<sup>98</sup> Chariots on Mycenaean kraters make their journey across the sea over wavy borders: VK, pl. III:16, 18.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. VK, pls. III:21 and X:4.

<sup>100</sup> Compare a similar figure on a Mycenaean krater (VK, pl. V:2), who is also either waving goodbye or mourning.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. VK, pl. IV:18.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. VK, pl. XIII:28.

<sup>103</sup> See Vermeule (footnote 79 above), pp. 60–62.

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite a first impression today that the paintings on larnakes are mainly decorative, we have seen that their imagery is like a language, often abbreviated but nevertheless containing meaningful messages. These painted images seem to have been intended to express a specific Minoan belief about life after death. It is for this reason that the repertory of larnax painting is so restricted: representations of battles, boxing, dancing, acrobatics, buildings, animal fights, lions, demons, and reeds found elsewhere in Minoan art do not appear on larnakes. In addition, certain larnax motifs, such as bird and bull, argonaut and goat, horns of consecration and bull, goat and flower, and bird and flower, were repeatedly and meaningfully combined within a single panel. The central concept which these scenes and motifs illustrate is the belief that the funerary rites for the deceased will ensure the protection of the goddess, who will see that the deceased travels across the sea to the bountiful Afterworld. In its fullest form this concept consists of a causal sequence (as in the Roman ritual formula, *do ut des*) with four steps: sacrifices (a) induce the protection of the goddess (b) for the safe journey of the deceased across the sea (c) to a Land of the Blessed (d).

The Knossos larnax (Pl. 82:f), for example, shows the rites (carried out by the mourner) which insure divine protection (goddess) and the sea journey (spiral field) to a land of regeneration (lily). On the Gazi larnax (Pls. 90:e, f, 91:a), a similar idea can be discerned: sacrifice (altars) ensures the overseas journey (octopodes) by ship to a paradise (barque and Nilotic landscape). The same sequence appears on a larnax from Episkopi (Pl. 85:d): sacrifice of bulls before the goddess (bulls, horns of consecration, and bird) leads to life everlasting overseas (central lilies between tricurved net with bivalves). The Agia Triada sarcophagus (Pl. 83:a, c) depicts the offerings made to the deceased on the front and the sacrifice to the goddess at her altar (on behalf of the deceased) on the back. The separate scenes of sacrifice on the front have parallels on later larnakes. For example, the sequential scenes on the Armenoi larnax (Pl. 87:f) suggest that the two separate processions on the front of the Agia Triada sarcophagus are derived from two principal rites of Minoan burial custom, the giving of gifts to the deceased at his burial, and the subsequent offerings left outside his tomb.<sup>104</sup> The side panels then may depict the pairs of goddesses who will carry the deceased to the Afterworld. Larnax scenes do not narrate Minoan funerary ritual. Rather, they present certain conventional motifs or symbols which represent funerary concepts. Egyptian tomb painters operate in the same fashion. Even though they are far more detailed, Egyptian tomb paintings present certain often-repeated scenes (offerings, the meal of the dead, libations, sacrifices, processions) rather than a narrative of the deceased's funeral.

Larnax painters frequently choose one part of the concept and repeat it on their larnakes. The scenes on the Gazi larnakes (Pl. 92:c, d, f-i), for example, are concerned only with the Afterworld, and the larnax in the Rethymnon Museum has two octopodes on the front (Pl. 83:d) and back. All four of the scenes on the Vasiliki Anogeia larnax (Pl. 83:f) are Nilotic. In other cases, the main theme appears on the front of the larnax, and other parts of the formula are implied through secondary motifs. Thus on the Armenoi larnakes

<sup>104</sup> These rites can be reconstructed from the offerings left at the Poros tomb, the Kephala tholos, the Royal tomb at Isopata, and Archanes tomb A: Pini, pp. 69-73 and Lembessi (footnote 5 above).

(Pls. 88:b, 92:a), scenes relating to sacrifice dominate the front, while marine and Nilotic motifs are relegated to the side panels. A third larnax from the coastal site of Gazi (Pl. 90:e, f) is painted only with marine scenes. Given the evidence for sea trade in the Gazi tomb,<sup>105</sup> it is tempting to view the scenes on the larnax as an individual commission. Artists abbreviate the formula by painting contrasting pairs of images on larnakes (as was done later on Greek vases). The Knossos larnax (Pl. 84:a, b), for instance, contrasts marine motifs on the front (spirals) with Nilotic ones on the back (papyri). A larnax from Maroulas (Pl. 86:a, b) has an opposing pair of marine (octopus) and Nilotic (papyrus) panels on the front, on the back, and on the lid.

What were the origins of larnax painting? Perhaps it is best to approach this question by first asking who painted the larnakes. The scenes provide plenty of clues, for they lack the naturalistic style of Minoan fresco painting. Human and animal figures are sketched in silhouette or outline with little concern for proportion or scale. Some details, such as hands and goat horns, are exaggerated because they carry special meaning. Realistic appearances, such as facial details or types of animal and floral species, are not kept up. Designs on skirts and robes, the delight of the fresco painter, become rough patterns. Stylistically larnax painting is far removed from fresco work. On the other hand, the painting styles of both larnakes and Palace Style jars are quite close. Both Palace Style and larnax compositions favor symmetrical groupings and organic forms often monumentalized and stylized (cf. Pls. 92:c and 82:e) into curvilinear and abstract patterns (cf. Pl. 82:c and d).<sup>106</sup> Practically all the themes on Palace Style jars, marine and floral compositions, frieze and dado motifs, also occur on larnakes. Both types of paintings delight in the same whimsical-looking combinations of nature, such as the flower-petaled bird, helmets swimming in the sea, the papyrus-lily, and argonaut-birds.<sup>107</sup> It seems likely that the larnakes were painted either by the same persons who painted Palace Style jars or by individuals who worked in close contact with them.

These artists also decorated bathtubs, kraters, and other vases. Bathtubs (e.g. Pl. 85:f) are painted with many of the motifs found on larnakes, e.g., octopodes, papyri, flowers, fish, "bivalves", checkerboards, and quatrefoils.<sup>108</sup> The painting styles of larnakes, bathtubs, and kraters are identical. In most cases, however, bathtubs lack the cult imagery and figural scenes common on larnakes. Judging from their painted imagery, some bathtubs seem to have been made originally for domestic use, while others were intended from the first as coffins.<sup>109</sup> Larnax painters also decorated the large amphoroid kraters (e.g. Pl. 88:c, e)

<sup>105</sup> Two LH IIIA2 stirrup jars, one LH IIIA2 kylix, and a West Cretan stirrup jar: Kanta, pp. 20–21.

<sup>106</sup> Similar Palace Style compositions: cf. Popham (footnote 28 above), pl. 5:a and *PM* IV, p. 320, fig. 261; Popham, *op. cit.*, pl. 5:c and Alexiou, pl. 3:g, respectively.

<sup>107</sup> Palace Style creatures: flower-petaled bird: Alexiou, pl. 20; helmet: *ibid.*, pl. 18:b; argonaut-bird: *PM* IV, p. 327, fig. 270.

<sup>108</sup> Kanta, octopodes, pl. 56:2; papyri, pl. 58:2; flowers, pl. 65:1; fish, pl. 56:3; checkerboard, pl. 81:5; and quatrefoils, pl. 52:5.

<sup>109</sup> The fish on the interior of a bathtub (Kanta, pl. 56:3) suggests a domestic function. The bathtubs are in fact a continuation of the Middle Minoan oblong-shaped coffin, as Rutkowsky (1968 [footnote 2 above]) shows. The bathtub from Gournia (Kanta, pl. 56:1) painted with bulls and the tub from Milatos (Xanthoudides, *Δελτ* 6 [footnote 12 above], p. 157, fig. 4) decorated with a landscape of flowers, fish, and birds were almost certainly made as coffins.

which came to replace Palace Style jars in the later 14th century B.C. Kraters share a number of motifs with larnakes: octopodes, argonauts, birds, flowers, papyri, and rosettes.<sup>110</sup> Like bathtubs, kraters are found both in tombs and in settlements. In addition, some alabastra, pyxides, and pithoid jars are painted in a manner close to that of larnax painting.<sup>111</sup>

Vase painters by training, the larnax artists produced a painting style which was distinctively "ceramic", that is, unnaturalistic, abbreviated, and reliant on symbols rather than on narrative scenes for its meaning. They drew their imagery and ideas from a variety of sources. Most of the abstract designs and animal and plant motifs which they employed, octopodes, fish, argonauts, flowers, "bivalves", and some Nilotic elements (birds, papyri, and palms), came from the repertory of vase painting, especially from the Palace Style.<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, they also drew certain motifs, large spirals (Pl. 83:b), dolphins (Pl. 82:b), and the griffin (Pl. 82:a), directly from existing frescoes. The influence of fresco painting on larnakes, in the form of borrowed motifs and the polychrome technique, is especially evident during the 14th century. These artists also responded to events and objects which they saw in the world around them. The cult paraphernalia (horns of consecration, double ax, and altar), the figure of the "goddess with upraised arms" (Pl. 91:e), and the ships (Pl. 90:e) depicted on larnakes, were based on real objects and rites. A number of the elements depicted on larnakes, the procession and last rites on the Agia Triada sarcophagus (Pl. 83:a), certain details in the hunting scenes (Pls. 92:a, 93:a, c), the chariot on the Kavrochori larnax (Pl. 89:c), perhaps the mourner on the Knossos larnax (Pl. 82:f), and the popular spiked palm (Pl. 92:i), suggest direct knowledge of Egypt. Lastly, at least one artist had seen a Mycenaean pictorial krater, as the Episkopi larnax (Pl. 93:a) demonstrates.

When discussing the origins of larnax painting it is important to keep in mind the distinction between motifs and iconography. There need not be any consistent connection between the ways the two developed. A motif used by a painter may be drawn from the contemporary world or from earlier artwork. Such a motif may be employed in its traditional sense or given a new meaning. Many religious motifs on larnakes, such as flora and Nilotic details, were artistically derived from secular wall paintings and Palace Style jars. This is to be expected, of course, since the Egyptian and Minoan visions of paradise are based on the enjoyments of daily life. Motifs derived from an artistic source likewise could keep their traditional meaning, such as the Palaikastro griffin, or be imbued with a different symbolism, such as the eschatological Nilotic motifs. The way in which the artists derived the iconography they used on larnakes is equally complex. They drew ideas, some traditional and some original, from their surroundings and from artistic sources. For example, the painter of the Agia Triada sarcophagus depicted a traditional Minoan sacrifice on the back of the coffin and what was probably a new rite on the front. Similarly some of the iconography derived from earlier art was conventional (e.g., bucrania and birds as divine attributes)

<sup>110</sup> Octopodes: Kanta, pl. 6:9; argonauts: S. Charitonidi, «Θαλαμοειδής τάφος Καρπάθου», Δελτ 17, 1961–1962, A' (1963; pp. 32–76), pl. 13:1; birds: *ibid.*, pl. 17:e; flowers: Kanta, pl. 95:8, 9; papyri: Charitonidi, *op. cit.*, pl. 12:b; rosettes: Kanta, pl. 77:1.

<sup>111</sup> E.g., the Kalyvia alabastra (Savignoni [footnote 3 above]), a pyxis from Kritsa (Kanta, pl. 54:4, 5), and the pithoid jar from Katsambas (Kanta, pl. 13:8).

<sup>112</sup> In turn, the Palace Style is heavily indebted to fresco painting, as Evans pointed out in *PM* IV, pp. 297–349.



and some seems new (e.g. the goat hunt in the Afterworld). Thus there is much more room in the development of larnax painting for local invention and learning from abroad than a simple comparison<sup>113</sup> of the motifs with earlier frescoes would lead one to believe.

Many of the earlier larnax scenes probably express older religious ideas. Scenes and motifs from traditional Minoan cult, especially those dealing with sacrifice, are popular on the earlier, Late Minoan IIIA larnakes. These cult images on larnakes therefore probably reflect the continuation of earlier funerary ideas and may in some cases have been viewed as symbolic replacements for sacrifice, as in Egyptian tomb painting.<sup>114</sup> On early larnakes, the Afterworld is envisioned as a blossoming land of springtime. On the LM IIIA larnax from Palaikastro (Pl. 82:a–c), sacrifice (horns of consecration and double ax) to the goddess (bird) ensures the deceased's journey overseas (fish) to an Aegean land of spring flowers (lilies). Other larnakes painted with floral motifs represent a similar concept.<sup>115</sup> On later larnakes these Aegean flora become less prominent. Marine scenes and motifs on early larnakes indicate that this Paradise was located overseas.<sup>116</sup>

By the middle of the 14th century, new types of scenes appear on larnakes. In Late Minoan IIIA2, they begin to depict the Afterworld in a Nilotic form, probably the result of Cretan contacts with Egypt. Figural scenes of hunting make their first appearance on LM IIIA2 larnakes. Representations of hunts or of men pitted against animals were common in earlier Minoan art but seem to relate to sacrifice. Under Egyptian and Mainland influence, Cretan concepts of the Afterlife apparently expanded to include hunting by the deceased. Thus Cretan larnax painters introduced new scenes (Pl. 87:f) and dramatized old ones (Pl. 92:a). During the Neopalatial period, the Minoans probably thought of the soul's journey as an overseas journey; by Late Minoan IIIA, funerary ships make the vision more concrete. The Episkopi larnax (Pl. 93:a) implies that by LM IIIB the soul's journey could

<sup>113</sup> As made, for example, in VK, p. 5.

<sup>114</sup> Pini (p. 70) sees the sacrificial scenes on the Agia Triada sarcophagus, for example, as replacements for real Cretan funerary ceremonies. Of the actual cult paraphernalia depicted on Late Minoan III larnakes (double axes, altars, bull sacrifices, horns of consecration, birds, and idols) all but horns of consecration occur in one form or another in association with EM II–MM II graves (Pini, pp. 23–28), but apparently not during the MM III–LM II period. In LM III graves, double axes, altars, bull (and wild goat) sacrifice, and horns of consecration reappear (Pini, pp. 63–70; Lembessi [footnote 5 above], p. 200).

<sup>115</sup> On these coffins, the deceased is implicitly regarded not as a unique living being but as an integral part of the natural world, who will experience the same physical regeneration. This idea, that man, animals, and flora were part of the natural realm protected by a Goddess, is probably older than the larnakes. The earliest association of floral motifs with the dead, unless the EM II flowers and leaves in gold foil from Mochlos are included, occurs on MM III burial pithoi: R. Seager, *The Cemetery of Pachyammos, Crete*, Philadelphia 1916, pls. I:IVa, VI (rosettes); I:1a, VIII:VIII (floral sprays); XVIII (papyri?). The painted decoration on the pithos in plate X looks like the Egyptian ankh symbol transformed into a floral motif.

If such a religious belief existed on Crete, it would explain why representations of the deceased are so rare on Minoan larnakes, in contrast to Egyptian and Mainland (pictorial kraters) funerary painting.

<sup>116</sup> The idea of an overseas Afterworld is at least as early as the Middle Minoan III period. Neopalatial burial pithoi are painted with marine motifs, e.g., MM III burial pithos with wavy spirals and impressed double axes from Mochlos: R. Seager, *Explorations in the Island of Mochlos*, New York 1912, fig. 51; dolphins depicted on two MM III pithoi from the Pachyammos cemetery: Seager (footnote 115 above), pls. IX, XIV; an MM III octopus jar from Pachyammos: *ibid.*, pl. XIII:XIb. This belief in an afterlife across the seas may be older still, for Minoan ship models are buried in graves as early as MMI: C. Davaras, «Μινωικὸ κρηιοφόρο πλοῖαριο τῆς Συλλογῆς Μητσotάκη», *Ἀρχ'Εφ* 1984, pp. 55–95.

be by chariot as well. The artistic scheme for this scene came from Egypt (as in Pl. 89:c), but the idea was probably a Mycenaean inspiration.

During the Late Minoan IIIA2–B period, the human figure on larnax scenes, whether hunter, chariot rider, or mourner, becomes noticeably more important. The scene on the Armenoi larnax (Pl. 92:a) seems to celebrate the prowess of the central hunter. On the Episkopi larnax (Pl. 93:a), the frontal mourners (like their successors in Classical vase painting) express real human emotions aimed directly at the viewer. Far removed from traditional Minoan compositions, these later scenes indicate that the concept of man's role in Late Minoan IIIA2–B Crete certainly became more anthropocentric, perhaps even heroic.

#### REFERENCES AND SOURCES FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

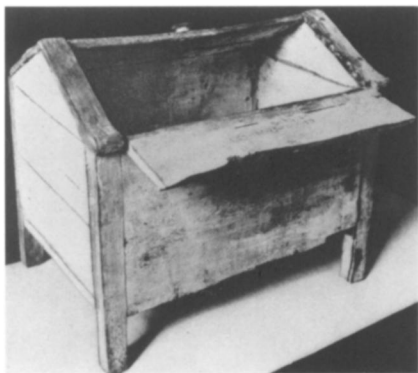
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 84:a, b. S. Hood, G. Huxley, and N. Sandars, "A Minoan Cemetery on Upper Gypsades," *BSA* 53–54, 1958–1959, p. 230, fig. 24:b and pl. 61.  
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 84:d. J. Hatzidakis, "Kretische Gräber," *AM* 38–39, 1913–1914, pp. 43–50, fig. 4. Author's photograph.  
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 84:h. C. Zervos, *L'art de la Crète néolithique et minoenne*, Paris 1956, pl. 777. Author's photograph.  
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 85:b. Kanta, pl. 102, no. 1.  
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- 86:a, b. Papapostolou (see Plate 85:c, e above), pp. 248–249, pl. 187:a and b.  
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 90:b, c. Papapostolou (see Plate 85:c, e above), pl. 188:b (b); Hiller (see Plate 85:c, e above), fig. 68, lower, p. 254, fig. 4 (c).  
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 91:b. Photograph, courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1930.  
 91:c. Kanta, p. 21 and pl. 113, no. 1. Author's photograph.  
 91:d. Davaras (see Plate 87:b, g above), fig. 17.  
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 92:c, d, f–i. Alexiou (see Plate 90:e, f, 91:a above), pl. 35:b (c), 36:c (f), and d (g), 37:b (d), c (h), and a (i).  
 93:a–d. Kanta, pp. 150–153 and pl. 63, nos. 1–5. Author's photograph.  
 93:e. Facsimile, courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1930.

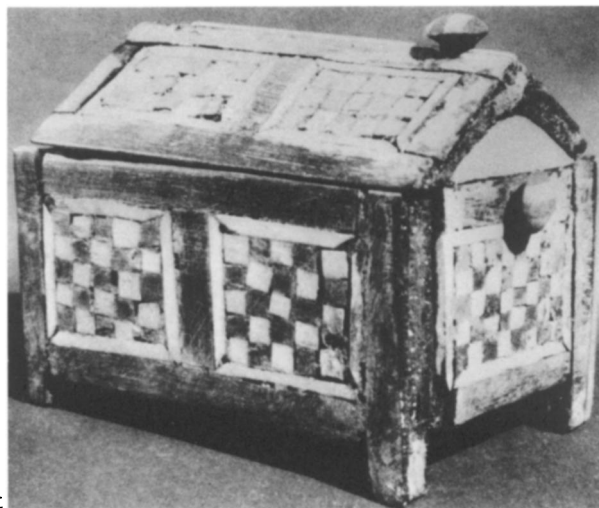
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L. VANCE WATROUS

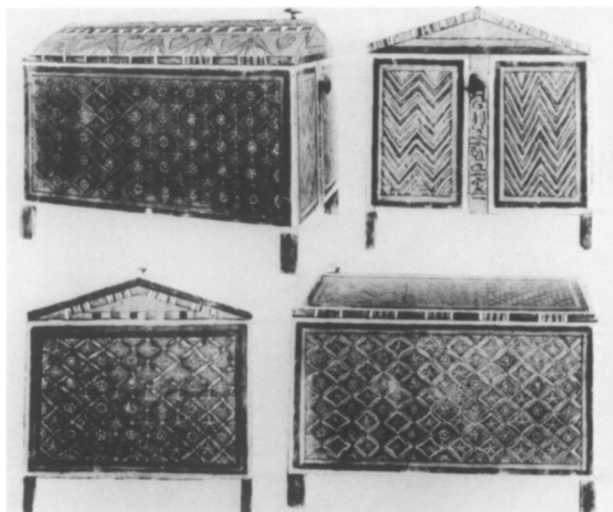
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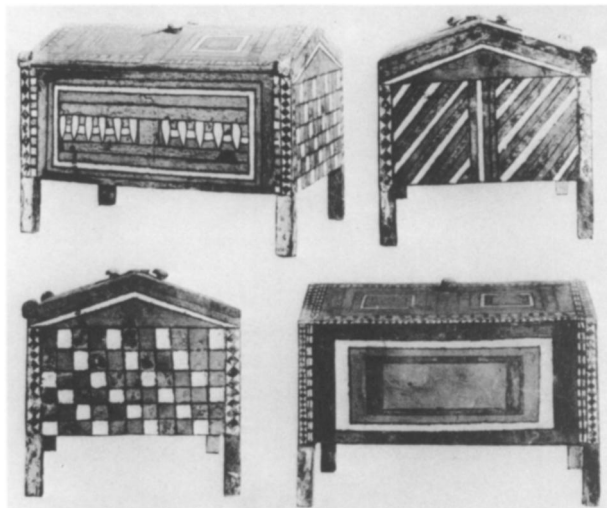
a. Coffin from Sedment



b. Chest from Sedment



c. Funerary chest from Tomb of Cha and Meryt, Thebes



d. Funerary chest from Tomb of Cha and Meryt, Thebes



e. Funerary chest from Tomb of Cha and Meryt, Thebes



f. Funerary chest from Tomb of Tutankhamen



a. Larnax from Palaikastro, front



b. Larnax (a), back



c. Larnax (a), right side



d. Palace Style Jar from Palace, Knossos



e. Palace Style Jar from Little Palace, Knossos



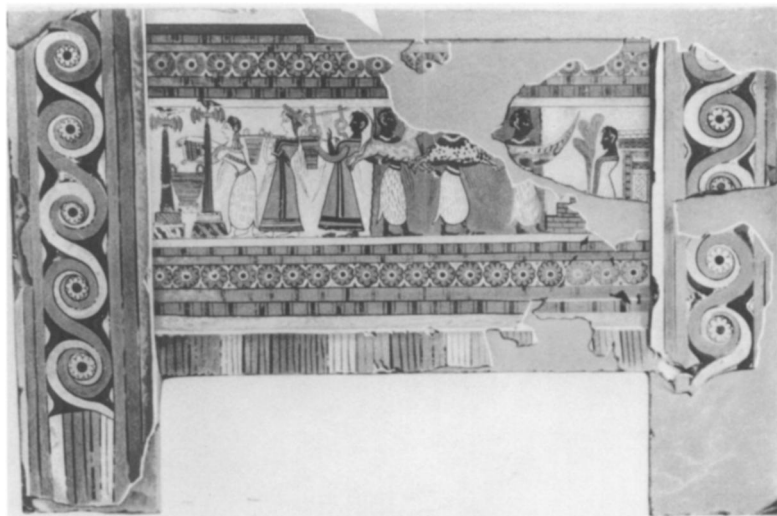
f. Larnax from Knossos



g. Larnax from Knossos, right side



h. Larnax from Phourni (Arkanes)



a. Agia Triada Sarcophagus, front



b. Larnax from Gazi



c. Agia Triada Sarcophagus, back



d. Larnax, Rethymnon Museum



e. Larnax, Agios Nikolaos Museum



f. Larnax from Vasiliki Anogeia (Mesara)





a. Larnax from Upper Gypsades, tomb VI, Knossos, back and left side

b. Larnax (a), left side and front



c. Larnax 10, Rethymnon Museum



e. Larnax from Prevelianon (Herakleion Museum)

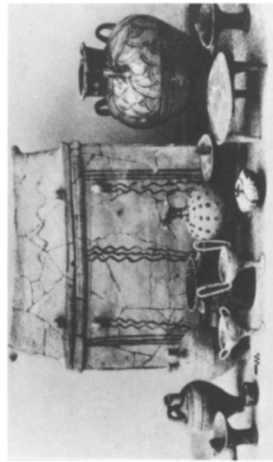
f. Larnax 10, Rethymnon Museum, detail of lid



d. Larnax from Tyliossos



h. Larnax from Vathianos Kampos



g. Larnax and vases from Katsambas



a. Larnax from Tzigounas



b. Larnax from Stavromenos



c. Larnax from Adele



d. Larnax from Episkopi  
(Ierapetra)



e. Larnax from Adele, drawing of motifs



f. Bathtub from Milatos





a. Larnax from Maroulas (Rethymnon Museum), front



b. Larnax (a), back



c. Larnax from Moni Arsani (?), Rethymnon



d. Larnax from Agios Syllas



e. Larnax, provenance unknown, Rethymnon Museum



f. Larnax, Rethymnon Museum



a. Larnax, Rethymnon Museum



b. Larnax from tomb 10, Armenoi



c. Larnax (e), right side



d. LM IIIB funerary krater, Rethymnon Museum



e. Larnax 2 from tomb 10, Armenoi, front



f. Larnax 1 from tomb 24, Armenoi, front



g. Larnax 1 from tomb 24, Armenoi, right side



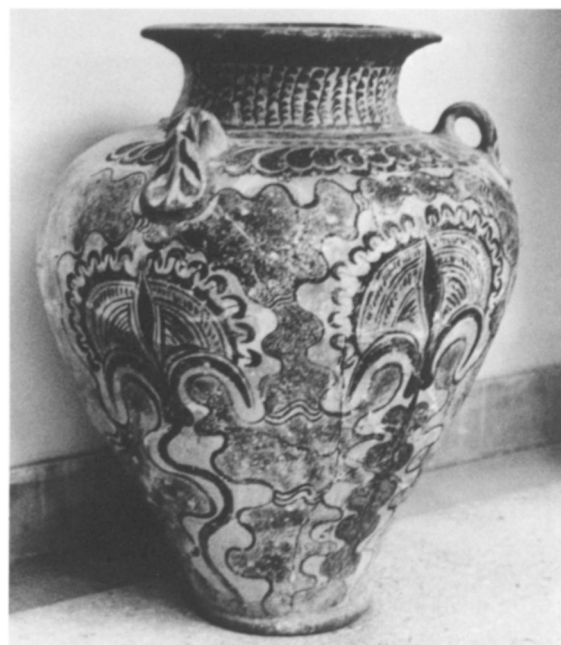
a. Larnax from tomb 17, Armenoi



b. Larnax from tomb 10, Armenoi



c. Krater from Karpathos



d. Palace Style jar from Northwest House, Knossos



e. Krater from Ligortino (Louvre Museum)



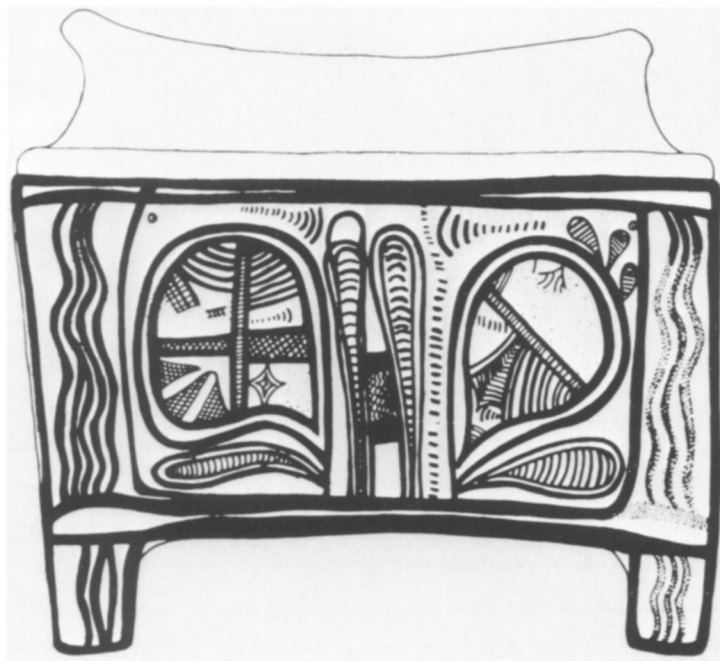
f. Larnax from Mallia



a. Larnax from tomb 118, Armenoi, left side



b. Larnax from Maroulas (Rethymnon Museum), right side



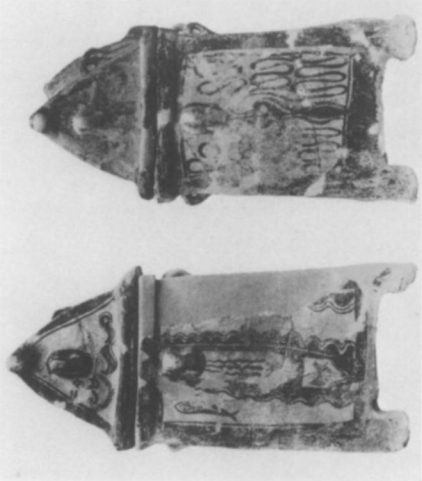
d. Larnax (b), front



c. Larnax (c), front



e. Larnax from Kavrochori (Herakleion Museum), back



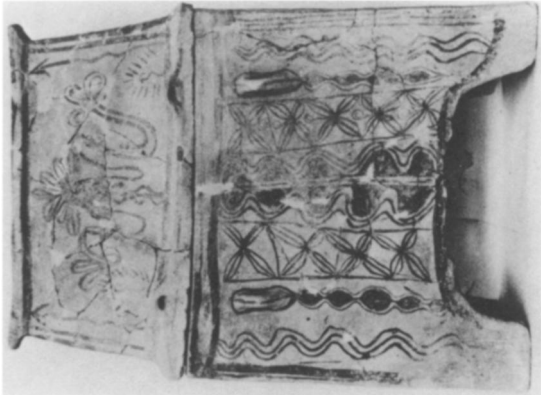
a. Larnax from Kavrochori (Herakleion Museum), sides



b. Larnax from Adele (Rethymnon Museum)



c. Larnax (b), drawing of motifs



d. Larnax from Gazi

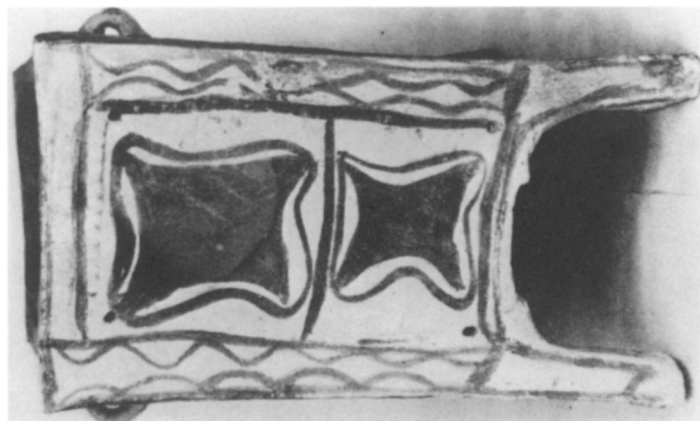


e. Larnax from Gazi (Herakleion Museum), front



f. Larnax (e), back

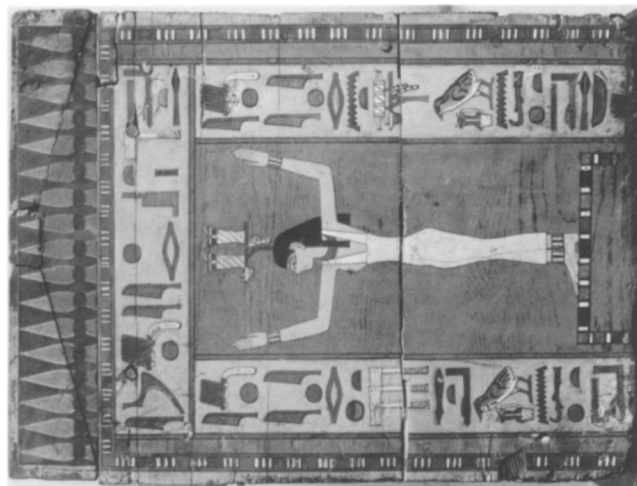




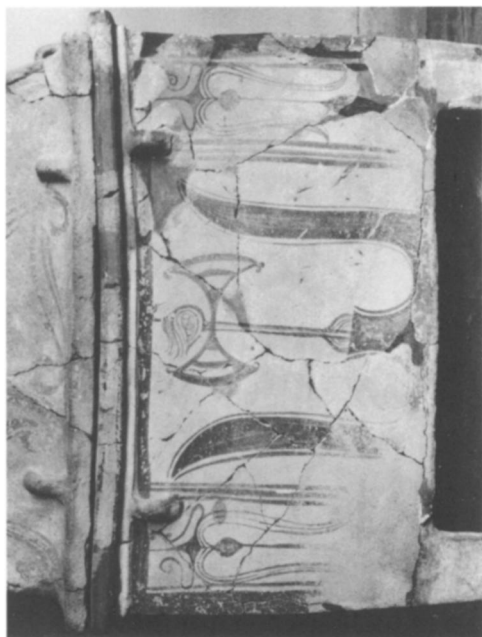
a. Larnax from Gazi (Herakleion Museum), left side



d. Larnax lid, Agios Nikolaos Museum



b. Middle Kingdom coffin of Khnumhotep



c. Larnax from Giofyrakia



e. Larnax from Armenoi



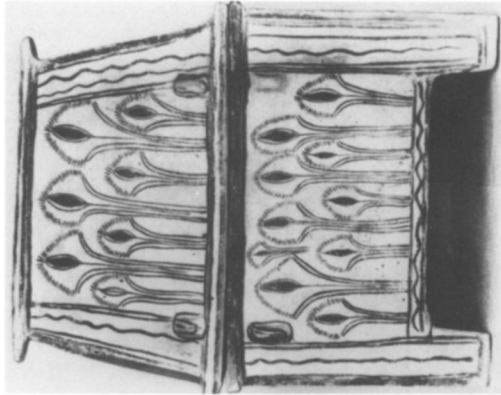
f. Larnax from Crete (Athens, National Museum)



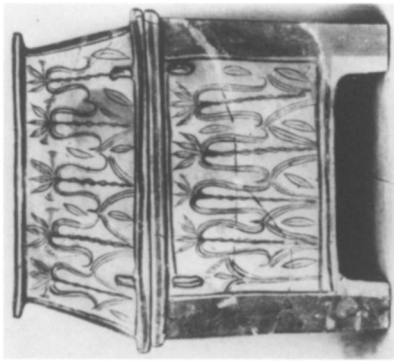
a. Larnax from tomb 11, Armenoi, front



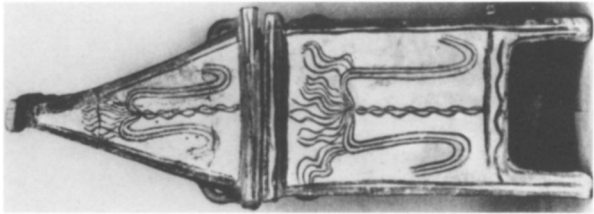
b. Larnax (a), back



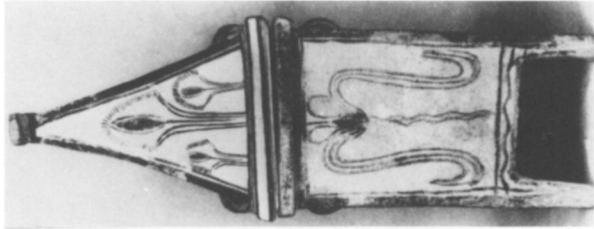
c. Larnax from Gazi (Herakleion Museum), front



d. Larnax from Gazi (Herakleion Museum), front



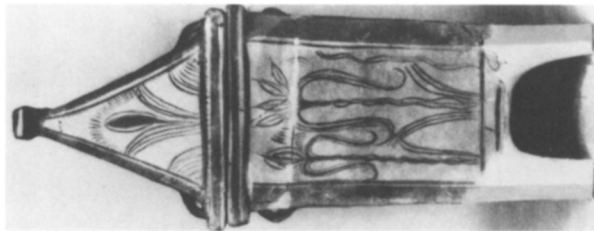
f. Larnax (c), left side



g. Larnax (c), right side



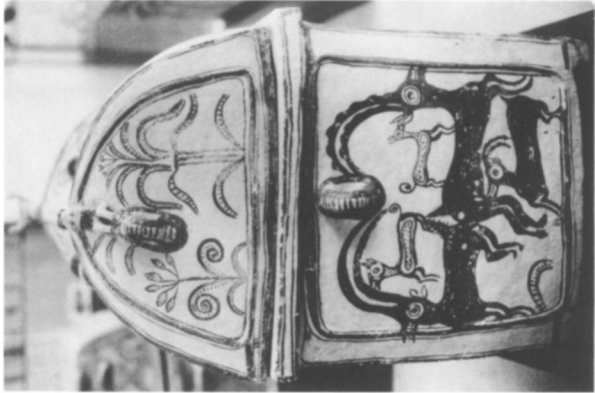
h. Larnax (d), left side



i. Larnax (d), right side



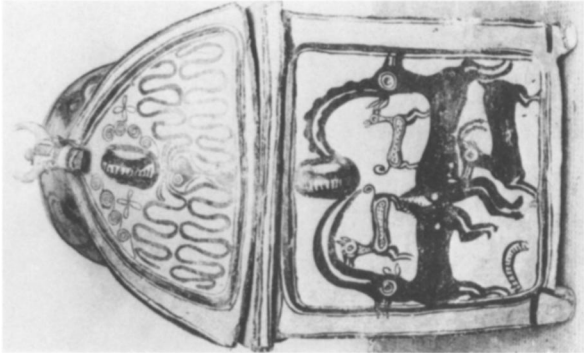
a. Larnax from Episkopi (Ierapetra), front



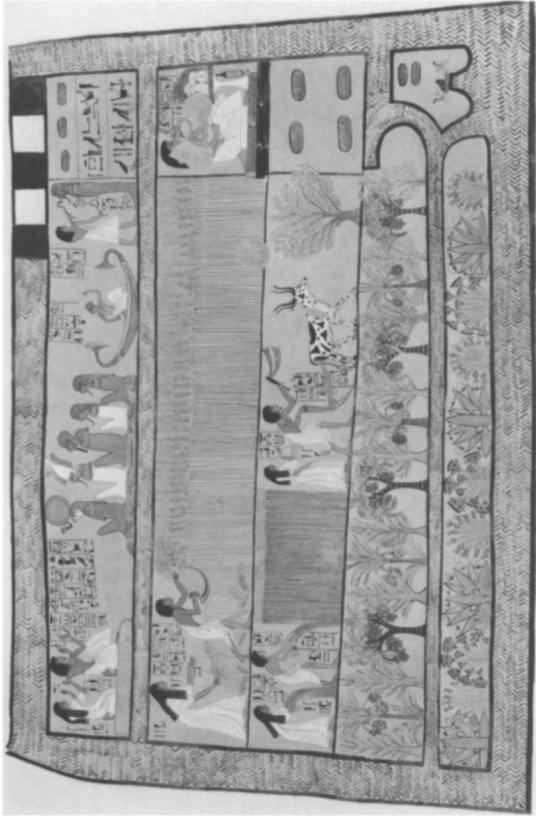
b. Larnax (a), left side



c. Larnax (a), back



d. Larnax (a), right side



e. Tomb of Sennedjem, Deir el Medina (wall-painting facsimile, Metropolitan Museum of Art)