

review of a gold foil object-covering excavated at the Peristeria tholos near Pylos by S. Marinatos in 1965; K.A. Yener examines the theme of victory ritual through the examination of cylinder seal impressions on a vessel found at Alalakh; more generally Yasur-Landau interestingly discusses the origins and meaning of the fenestrated bronze axe and/or its representation from the MBA southern Levant to the EIA West Mediterranean.

It seems important here to say that in the context of Mesopotamian and Egyptian art and their informing of Aegean Bronze Age art, the tradition of linear, side-on and two-dimensional representation of symbolic concepts or actual events is so inherent and standard that when used to represent multiple figures it can never be seen straightforwardly to represent processions, whether of funerary, cultic or military type. It may be more correct to understand these simply as crowd scenes. F. Blakolmer's sophisticated and experienced contribution makes related points including that the 'procession' (if indeed represented) in such contexts functions as a symbolic trope ('fossilised iconic form'), rather than any directly decodable representation of real activity. He also points out that the majority of 'processive' Cretan and Crete-related scenes show outdoor locations, well known for ritual at this period: he suggests links between these outdoor themes and women in ritual (I. Tournavitou's paper also highlights the female emphasis in most processive scenes), with indoor/architectural backgrounds linked to more functionally-related male gatherings or groups. It seems best to seek evidence for actual processions and their nature outside the sphere of art while using art and its contexts to understand the nature and meaning of ritual activities at different times and places, given that Bronze Age art is very much focused on elite/ritual settings. Some of the best contributions do this, including Wright's and Nelson's mentioned above. E. Mantzourani (Cyprus) and M. Bettelli, E. Borgna and S. Tiziana Levi (Italy) offer overviews of historically and recently investigated sites in regard to ritual spaces, incorporating interest in processions and their spaces at settlement and landscape level while not being fixated by it – the latter extend their investigation of ritual to a fascinating 12m long depositional tank located at Noceto near Parma, dated in the fifteenth century BC, in which the typically ritualised water depositions of Bronze Age Europe took on a special structured form. N. Kumar's addressing of the context of the New Kingdom Theban tomb paintings, especially the connections, status and activities of the tomb owners, is fresh because it looks at what representations of Aegeanising individuals as *groups*, for specific groups signify; B.S. Kunkel's and J. Earle's

papers on rhyta similarly concern themselves with context, with useful attention to the materiality and spatiality of physical features such as routeways and cult repositories in Cretan and Cycladic settlements. Earle usefully documents the clear arrival of the rhyton shape, like that of other wheelmade items, in the late MC/early LC Cyclades first through direct Cretan imports, then latterly through imaginative and diversifying local production and use. Routeways in the context of ritual are also addressed by other papers – S. Chryssoulaki and I. Pappas on the Archaic-period Phaleron cemeteries, C. Macdonald on the stratigraphy of the theatral area at Knossos, and J. Soles on the idea that all roads in the small LMI-LMIII port of Mochlos led to a ritual building of some sort and thus could house processions (however his comments on the spatial context of the Early Minoan west terrace tombs are more targeted and successful in my view).

Outlier papers, well-edited to offer wide-ranging comparative discussion include M. Mitrovich on the enigmatic, supernaturally-resonant nature of the octopus as an encountered, represented and imagined being in Cretan cultural life; B. Jones and V. Bealle's detailed documentation of experimental attempts to create a garment which hangs in the exact way represented in the kilts of the Procession fresco at LMI Knossos, and K. P. Foster's ambitious suggestion that some representations of eyes in Aegean fresco paintings indicate selective use of psychedelic substances, in which she appears to include opium. Macgillivray's provocative argument that the Ayia Triada LMI 'Harvester Vase' scenes (accepted straightforwardly by him as denoting a likely real event) depict a military parade of marines with tridents rather than an agriculturally themed celebration, highlights Bronze Age communities' ability to both create and read scenes of which we struggle to capture either the intended or effective meaning by simply viewing, in however much detail. This volume is never dull.

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Judith Muñoz-Sogas, *Thirsty Seafarers at Temple B of Kommos: Commercial Districts and the Role of Crete in Phoenician Trading Networks in the Aegean*. pp. 145, 175 B/W and colour figures, 2 tables. Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2022. ISBN: 978-1-80327-322-8, softcover £31.00.

What are the essential differences between a colony and an entrepot or trading centre, and how are they manifested, and how variably according to setting, history and recovery circumstances, in the archaeological record? Many eminent scholars have attacked these questions with regard to the rich history of Mediterranean interaction during the first millennium BC.¹ This PhD, copiously if erratically illustrated but slim in length and limited in content and analysis, tells us lots of what we already know from the exemplary publications of Kommos in the 1990s–2000s, much cited here.² In apparently trying to answer a more specific version of the above question (the abstract suggests the aim is ‘to understand Phoenician presence and trade in Aegean temples’), the book consistently reifies the Phoenicians in terms of the objects of Phoenician type found across the east Mediterranean in the early first millennium, to a degree which would surprise even authors of older interpretations on this theme (e.g. Coldstream) in its lack of theorisation around evidence for travel, exchange, and cultural identity (in one of many examples we learn on *Archaeopteris* pp10 that ‘in the case of Kommos, we can certainly confirm Phoenician presence and culture by looking at the oriental structure of Temple B and its finds’). The book’s specific task is to show Kommos, in close comparison with sites including the Samian Heraion, Kition in Cyprus and Vroulia in Rhodes as a ‘commercial centre’, which Sogas attempts to define in the Early Iron Age as typically a combination of residential settlement, trade point and cult locale in one place. The point of doing this for Kommos, a settlement with a well-documented sequence of Iron Age temples including Temple B with its notably Phoenicianising altar and long argued to have been an internationalising trade venue remains unclear. More broadly, we are already sure that exchanges of a complex and varied nature involving travellers from and to the east Mediterranean seaboard (and Egypt) took place along the southern coast of Crete during the Early Iron Age (see Betancourt et al 2024 reviewed below), and that cult mediated some of them.

Exploring and evaluating uncontroversial well-accepted hypotheses and evidence-based arguments can potentially form part of a PhD exercise, but surely some rigour or argument structure need to be applied even at this stage. They seem lacking here in favour of a jumble of bland but also over-confident, non-unpacked assertions – e.g. on pp4 we are told ‘Crete was a very important stop for Phoenician merchants on their east-west route’, but also that

‘we cannot know about the ethnic origin of a potter by looking at his/her pots’. Certain smaller claims and arguments emerge in the course of the book but again seem to attack straw men; Sogas suggests the existence of a model stating that Eleutherna was not a site of exchange for Phoenicia-based individuals. Whether this could ever be established from an assemblage which mainly comprises funerary material is left unanswered, as is the question of who has proposed such a model and with what end. Further tilting at windmills is exemplified in Sogas’ contrapositioning of the work of Aubet to that of E. Pappalardo (spelt sometimes as Papalardo, among numerous other syntax and occasional spelling errors suggesting limited editing). This is done on the premise that Aubet has presented Kommos Temple B as an economic site only, while Pappalardo sees it as having a cult role only; no page references are given to these supposed hard points of view, pp10. In general, sophisticated theorisation of past arguments is lacking: eyebrow-raising terms such as ‘businessmen’ ‘foreigners’ and ‘capitalism’ to describe ancient economic activity are used naively and expected to be swallowed whole, doing a disservice to much more sophisticated contributions on this subject of ethnicity, trade and cult.³

We are eventually taken on a descriptive tour of various coastal Mediterranean settlements and other sites with Phoenicianising material. Little clear structuring or argument inform that tour, and its conclusions mostly reiterate the descriptions, offering some contradictory and confused characterisations of Phoenician ‘presence’ rather than offering new insights on evidence, some of which is simply misunderstood or not properly studied (e.g. we get several references to the high altitude, non-settlement Idaean cave cult site as a site of regular Phoenician manufacturing; the whole discussion of the Kato Simi sanctuary is under the misapprehension that the site is a cave; repeated reference to ‘ferrous inclusions in pottery’ suggests a similar lack of familiarity with relevant archaeological material and sites; on pp48 Sogas refers to goods ‘moving along the shores’ of the Kairatos river to Knossos: the analogy with Phoenician sites on major estuaries in southern Spain simply is not useful for this small, narrow dry river bed and the ancient site and landscape of Knossos, as anyone familiar with the site would know; discussion of the Psychro Cave assemblage makes no reference to Boardman’s work.⁴ Such

¹ See Hodos 2020.

² Shaw and Shaw 2000, in particular.

³ See e.g. Hodos 2020.

⁴ Boardman 1961.

obtrusive problems highlight the lack of authority in the work as a whole.

As might be expected in some student work, accessing professional-quality illustrations has been difficult and thus we are presented with lots of shots taken in museums through vitrines in poor light and poorly composed site photographs, as well as some ambitious drawn 'artistic' copies of objects or varying quality and without technical conventions or scales. Surprisingly, a very poor reproduction of inappropriate scale and resolution is made of Shaw and Shaw's general site plan of Kommos, surely important here (Fig. 1.6).

There seems little point in publishing PhDs without prior professional peer-review of them as scholarly publications contributing something new in an appropriate format and an appropriate level. Here, I struggled to find anything new. One of the concerning things is the characterisation of 'research' as simply selecting a range of evidence groups and hypotheses to review/describe, without considering how one relates to the other or has been related in the past, but as though these were elements in a paintbox. Here there is neither a standalone literature review or justification of selections made. 'Fieldwork' simply means visits to a selection of the chosen sites or museums. The publishing editor should take responsibility for these issues of quality; the author's supervisors may have advised on the lack of original contribution and proper procedure; if so, this could have been improved for publication.

Boardman, J. 1961. *The Cretan Collection in Oxford: The Dictaeon Cave and Iron Age Crete*. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press.

Hodos, T. 2020. *The Archaeology of the Mediterranean Iron Age: A Globalising World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shaw, J.W. and Shaw, M. 2000. *Kommos IV: The Greek Sanctuary* (2 vols). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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Metaxia Tsipopoulou, with a contribution by Eleni Nodarou. *Petras, Siteia II. A Minoan Palatial Settlement in Eastern Crete. Late Bronze Age Pottery from Houses 1.1 and 1.2*. Prehistory Monographs 67. pp. 225, 98 B/W figures, 29 B/W and 13 colour plates, 68

tables. Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-93153-432-1, hardcover £60.00.

Systematic publication of Petras, a large multi-period Cretan coastal site with the earliest material found dating to the Final Neolithic, is aided by the straightforward format and layout of the Prehistory Monograph volumes. Here, pottery of the Neopalatial period mainly from one building; House 1.1, forms the excavator's focus (the architecture, deposits and other finds having been published in 2016: M. Tsipopoulou, *Petras, Siteia I: a Minoan palatial settlement in eastern Crete*. Prehistory Monographs 53. Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press). The building, lying north of and below a palace or administrative building on the hill summit, includes the earliest complex stone olive pressing installation discovered in the Aegean but is likely residential in character like its less-excavated neighbour 1.2, with two floors reconstructed.

The decision has been taken to present the pottery by shape category, with multiple sub-forms usually listed for each shape. The catalogue entries for each shape appear by room/space as it was presented in the earlier publication, so that each individual pot can be traced back to its context. Plates and figures, however, group all the examples of a defined type together for useful comparison. The waste of paper on lengthy concordance tables (pp. 167-217) could have been avoided by adopting a much simpler context-based numbering system: findspots all appear in the catalogue and can be easily checked in the companion volume. Statistics are clearly presented: Figures 94-6, simple histograms indicating the frequency of different categories of pottery, highlight real differences between rooms, although a rather simplistic dual approach is taken to quantification: instead of calculating vessel MNIs, individual sherds are counted and their numbers presented (telling us little) alongside those of reconstructable vessel small finds. Notwithstanding some problems with this – e.g. in cases where the volume of sherds is higher than that of identifiable vessels – the method allows identification of areas where specific activities such as storage of various types, or drinking by potentially different social sub-groups took place. The catalogue is a work of painstaking and knowledgeable detail with plentiful comparanda presented for each shape and sub-shape, drawing on the author's long and deep expert knowledge of Cretan pottery: analysis of pottery use in relation to space/context appears within this discussion, when it might have been more accessibly viewed in the general conclusions.