For example, we get the important argument that large numbers of handleless cups in the LM IB destruction deposit of House II.1 relate to the practice of 'a hierarchical ritual of token hospitality, as well as to work-feasts' (pp. 59-60) rather than to the elite symposia typical of the Petras palace and its peer across Crete. Tsipopoulou's finding that there is minimal difference between LM IIA and LMIB production technologies and the evidence for mass production in identical vessel forms and dimensions (e.g. in the cups) is also discussed here, while contexts of 'storage', 'use' and 'curated discard' in pits which 'represent a mnemonic record of ritual deposition' are also conceptualised. Rich interpretation similarly appears for subtypes of the conical cup such as the bowl: e.g. arguments for this shape as having mainly food use or use as a lamp are set out, on the basis that it would be hard to drink from (pp80). The large number of fenestrated stands is noted as unusual in this period and an interpretation made that they served in feasts within the building, pp111.

Regarding the LM III pottery, which Tsipopoulou notes mostly dates to LM IIIA-B, with lesser representation of LM IIIC, the large concentration is noted and the idea of any ephemeral or seasonal occupation discounted: this is important as we build up our recognition of consistent occupation of major LM I settlements through the LM IIIA-B period. A Knossian import was able to be identified macroscopically with the identification confirmed by petrographic study, but the very small number of identified whole vessels of all types considered (78) makes the value of identifying fabric groups limited. Notable among these for me are the coarse flaring basins with applied and impressed cordon near the rim, which largely disappear by LM IIIC, when a carinated ledge-rimmed form starts to become more common (Figs. 84-93). As for the Neopalatial pottery, the tables show some excessive repetition, the table of technical characteristics (Table 62) simply repeats a few of the details – clay and paint colour – from the catalogue. Table 63 tabulates decorative forms rather in the manner of a spreadsheet for the project's own use – conclusions from this data, already presented in the catalogue should have been drawn together in the commentary, rather than re-presented in a non-searchable form.

The drawings, the crucial information source, are well presented, though perhaps not so many near-identical vessels such as the conical cups (299 catalogued) were worth illustrating individually. Plans and sections of the buildings could have been presented better (e.g. not so many absolute heights on the walls; line scales of adjusted size; standard conventions on section drawings).

As usual, Nodarou's contribution on the petrography (pp.131-51) is impeccable and includes designation of fabric groups for the 104 pottery small finds of earlier (EM-MM) date studied by M. Relaki in the companion volume (pp. 93-124). The half-page full colour reproductions of the ceramic thin sections, are a luxury, though not likely to be validly compared by to or referred to by non-specialists in petrography.

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Anastasia Kanta, Costis Davaras and Philip P. Betancourt, with contributions by Davaras, G. Flouda, C.E. Galanaki, D. Grigoropoulos, D.Z. Kontopodi, G. Marakis. C. Papadaki, M. Perna, E. Platon, P. Themelis, and R.H. Wilkinson, *Honors to Eileithyia at ancient Inatos: the sacred cave at Tsoutsoros, Crete: highlights of the collection*. pp. 183, 1 table; 60 B/W figures fully illustrated catalogue with colour photographs of each object. Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press, 2022. ISBN: 9-781-93153-431-4, hardcover £57.00

and,

Günther Hölbl, with contributions by P.P. Betancourt and K. Chalikias, *The shrine of Eileithyia: Minoan goddess of childbirth and motherhood at the Inatos cave in southern Crete. Vol. 1. The Egyptian-type artefacts*. Prehistory Monographs 69. pp. 87, 14 B/W figures; 26 colour plates illustrating each catalogued object, 4 tables. Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press, 2022. ISBN: 9-781-93153-434-5, hardcover £55.00.

These two works in a planned series are rooted in an initiative by Museum of Heraklion staff and a local Cretan organisation interested in reclaiming local heritage assets. With funding from INSTAP, these groups sponsored study of ancient objects found in the Inatos/Tsoutsouros cave on the south coast of central Crete. These objects have never been previously studied as a group and derive from looting returns/confiscations/identifications and

finds from emergency excavations in response to looting: the latter were conducted by Nikolaos Platon and Costis Davaras in 1962.

Some ancient Cretan sanctuaries at some periods included a substantial element of interaction with the extra-island world, forming an important part of their raison d'être. In south central Crete Kommos and Tsoutsouros, near major natural harbours, performed this role in the Bronze/Iron Age through Roman periods, as Amnisos (which was like Tsoutsouros, associated both with a cult of Eileithyia and with a cave cult) did on the north coast during the Bronze Age, as Flouda explains in the first volume (pp.33-7). The sanctuaries engaged such interaction in different ways – often not by promoting generic forms of cult practice, but by building local cults which could nonetheless be flexibly accessed by visitors from various regions. In the case of Tsoutsouros, where the first evidence of (unclear type of) use dates to EM IIB, some subsequent Bronze Age use recalls peak sanctuaries in the type of objects deposited – small human and animal figures and miniature vases with relatively little bronzework or large value items. However, peak sanctuaries mostly ended by the Neopalatial period, while caves and other open-air sanctuaries, typically having more intense and direct palatially-linked involvement, continued and grew in use, with deposition of high-value personal and specialised items, as also occurs here. We would expect major change from around 1200 BC as Crete's whole political and settlement structure changed – not only in intensity of use, as established sanctuaries took on a new linking role for fragmented and resettled regional populations, but in use as arenas for interpolity competition. This seems indicated at Tsoutsouros just as at the Psychro and Idaean Caves (e.g. in a growth in deposition of high-value items by the Geometric period) yet an extra dimension appears in the Tsoutsouros cult activities, strongly linked into aspects of the settlement goddess temples emerging from LM IIIB/C-Protogeometric, cf. the snake tubes and kalathoi found here (Kanta in vol 1, pp.60-1). The specific focus of this activity here is however not paralleled in settlement shrines: very specialised types of figurine and figurine-vessel are involved, showing three-dimensional representations of sex, motherhood and birth, weaving in aspects of reference to the sea through notable boat models with attached figures of babies and adults (Kanta, pp.77-141). Both aspects of cult seem to have run in parallel through the Early Iron Age: by Archaic times a growing element of internationalism is also seen with deposits of Egyptian or Egyptianising material in the form of faience and clay female figurines, strongly recalling aspects of practice at both Kommos and Amnisos. The sanctuary continued to form the focus of a named goddess cult through Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods: a Roman building and smaller cave with Roman use lie just outside the cave.

This story demonstrates the role of place – created and natural – in Cretan history, with classic elements associated with cult – cave, river, spring, harbour – all present, yet very differently encountered and manipulated over time. Fertility and childbirth seem to have been a particularly accessible and amenable long-term arena for cultic activity. The rich artefact record of the cave, despite its typically mixed stratigraphy, limited quality of excavation and disturbance through extensive remodelling as well as looting (both volumes note that Roman pottery was found in every context), demonstrates the above points in these two very different through overlapping presentations. The first volume, an overview with brief introductions and observations, picks out striking complete or restored objects appealing to Kanta (a prehistorian) on which she can usefully elaborate and hypothesise; the other is the first in a non-chronological series of scholarly full catalogues with detailed expert background to be ordered by date and/or type. There are some duplications: Wilkinson's study in volume 1 'Catalog of selected artefacts of Egyptian type' (pp.165-77) strongly overlaps with Holbl's full catalogue; volume 1 also includes images of or refers to items not presented at all in either work; e.g. Fig. 36, pp 42 showing whole restored vases where catalogue numbers are not given; Fig. 41 where catalogue numbers 566 onwards are used as labels for individual photographs (boat models) but again no reference is made to their intended publication. The cataloguing of chosen items is idiosyncratic, combining a concise museum-style description with largely meaningless reproductions of entries from the very limited excavation records regarding context, e.g. 'by the north wall where the flimsy cross-wall is located.' At minimum, a current state plan of the cave should have been provided to allow reconstruction of context and make these extracts relevant.

Introductions, particularly those in the Hölbl volume by Betancourt and Betancourt and Chalikias (pp. 1-23; see also Galanaki and Papadaki pp. 3-9 in vol. 1) assist our understanding in terms of knowledge about sites in the vicinity of the cave as well as the problems of the excavation (the latter outlined by E. Platon in volume 1, pp. 9-15). They show the importance of the natural harbour of Inatos, well documented in Classical to Roman texts and archaeology and latterly closely attached to the polity of Priansos

(Ano Kastelliana) above it to the north: occupation in the area dates back to the Final Neolithic period with extensive Bronze through Iron Age settlement remains, but nothing to suggest a polity directly controlling the sanctuary or the harbour in those periods. Betancourt (volume 2, pp.1-15) attempts a semi-interpretative clarification of the excavation data. He refers to at least three reorganisations of the space, with unclear Bronze-Iron deposition on the cave floor and in some niches, the construction of an altar within the Archaic period, then a Roman-period relevelling of the floor. With the huge problem of context, quantification and related assessments about intensity or type of use become even more difficult and no serious attempt is made at them overall in vol. 1, beyond a few references such as one (Kanta, pp.39) to 250 miniature Minoan vessels, some of which are catalogued among the 175 objects chosen in total by Kanta and Kontopodi (pottery and Egyptian-type objects) and Kanta (other materials) and catalogued by Kanta (prehistoric to Classical), Grigoropoulos (Roman pottery) and Wilkinson (Egyptian type objects) in very different amounts by period. Short background pieces or special-interest notes related to script (including Linear A on a miniature vessel from the cave) and text sources are authored by Flouda, Themelis and Perna (pp. 15-39) in the volume 1 mix. Hölbl's volume presents a methodical, detailed and very high-quality analysis of all 83 Egyptianising objects to which he had access – e.g. comparing the context of arrival and deposition of scarabs as prestigious objects in the MM period to the deposition of magical amuletic items of a much broader variety sourced through likely wider Levantine networks, by worshippers in the Early Iron Age (tenth century given as the start date) and onwards. Notable among the latter are Bes figurines, strongly associated with fertility in Bronze to Iron Age Egyptian ritual (pp.29-53). Their regular appearance in the cave suggests a coherent understanding and appreciation of its meaning by widely travelled and travelling individuals. Familiarity with and/or close links to the site for some residents of the Nile valley are also indicated by finds like the magical staff or wand decorated with a group of monkeys, unique outside the latter region (eleventh-eighth century BC; pp. 49-50); the association of monkey imagery, recurring in the Egyptianising material, with erotic love and motherhood is also noted.

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Jesse Millek, *Destruction and Its Impact on Ancient Societies at the End of the Bronze Age.* pp. 387, figs. 23, index. Columbus, Georgia: Lockwood Press, 2023. ISBN: 978-1-948488-83-9, hardcover $89.95.[1]

In this finely produced monograph, the author defends a somewhat heretic view, downplaying the different abandonments and destructions taking place at the end of the Late Bronze Age in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean that have been identified by a century of archaeological research. His specific intent is to show, on the one hand, that not all destructions happened at the same time, and had various causalities, and, on the other hand, that some previously claimed destructions were either misinterpreted or simply represented minor incidents. As such, Millek's contextual approach seems somewhat inspired by Knapp and Manning's deconstructive tactic.[2] His position is set out in a first chapter where he usefully summarises how the idea of a massive 1200 BCE destruction crept into the literature. But it is *his* focus on a particular year (even if accepting 20 years before and after) that forms a major weakness of this book. His crusade against what he calls the Atlantis premise – the lumping together of events in a single moment of destruction (p.15) – is more a construct of past narratives than what is currently alive among the many scholars actually working on the period: not an event but a process, a fateful century – *un siècle maudit* – that roughly covers the years between 1250 and 1150 BCE, a century during which major adverse events happened, dramatically shaping the future.[3] This said, the scope of his work is considerable – rarely have so many sites and destructions (153, with full bibliography) been scrutinized to see if there is tangible evidence to conclude wholesale destruction. This is the book's strength but also its weakness since no archaeologist – and this includes Millek – can claim to have considerable expertise to judge events or site taphonomies of dozens of excavations that took place in the Aegean, Anatolia, Cyprus and the Levant, some excavated more than one hundred years ago. I can only object

[1] I want to thank A. Maeir, J. Bretschneider, P. Fischer, R. Jung, J. Davis and T.F. Cunningham for feedback but they are obviously not responsible for the views expressed here.

[2] Knapp and Manning 2016.

[3] All periodizations are artificial constructs but the end of the Late Bronze Age also implies that afterwards iron becomes increasingly more used, something not considered by Millek. On iron finds, see Pare 2017, especially p. 23-24 who counted 52 weapons and tools from the 12th c. Aegean, Cyprus and Levant, and 124 objects in iron from the 11th c. BCE.