



Thanks for the Memories

Al Leonard

President, Friends of INSTAP SCEC

Recently, I spent a few days touring Crete with Tom Brogan and Kostas Chalikias while we put the finishing touches on MINOTAGE: Archaeology Meets Wine, the Study Center’s fundraising tour scheduled for May 2024. What a pleasure! They brought me up to date on all that was new and much that—to be honest—I had forgotten (Fig. 1).

When not talking about archaeology, our conversations must have sounded like *The Deipnosophistae*¹ on wheels, with discussions punctuated by individual views on how *barbouni* (red mullet) is prepared at favorite restaurants in eastern Crete or the intricacies of distilling *raki* (also called *tsikoudia*) from grapes, a favorite alcoholic beverage of Cretans. One lunch stands out in particular. Who knew that you could get fresh, farm-raised trout and salmon at Votomos Taverna in Zaros? Tom and Kostas knew. Over lunch we rambled on about how well our meal would pair with the excellent Thrapsathiri wine that we had sampled “just up the road” in Melambes. It had been crafted by Ilyana Milahin, a talented young winemaker who takes an organic and holistic approach to vinification, and she even plays Cretan music to her wines as they mature.

Our days together brought back fond memories of Crete from many years ago. I had first learned about Cretan music from a lyra player at *Erotokritos*, a taverna in Heraklion, who was known locally as *Psaronikos*, a nickname that he inherited from his grandfather (*Psarantonios*) who had earned it for his exploits during the Ottoman domination. We remained close friends and later, after he became famous and my landlady heard him sing *Pote tha kamei Xasteria* in my apartment in Athens, I could do no wrong.

1. The reference is, of course, to the work of Athenaeus of Naucratis, the cosmopolitan entrepôt in the western Nile Delta where for several years I co-directed the Naucratis Project with Willy Coulson in whose memory the William D.E. Coulson Conservation Laboratory at the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete is named.



Figure 1. Tom and Kostas discuss an ancient winery installation at the side of the road near Kato Zakros. Photo by author.

I was introduced to the archaeology of Crete by Emily Vermeule as a Classics major at Boston University, after which I spent time in the U.S. Air Force at Heraklion Air Station (now closed). I would commute from my apartment near Knossos in a 1949 Plymouth station wagon, often stopping halfway to have a coffee with friends next to the ruins at Amnissos.



Figure 2. When your GPS is ambiguous, always seek local advice.
Photo by author.

These were the halcyon days before the “new road” was built. Travel around the island was more segmented. Directions and distances were determined by a series of conversations and computations with real people rather than with an ephemeral GPS (Fig. 2). I joined the Hellenic Alpine Club (*Ellenikos Oriatikos Syndesmos* or simply EOS) and, at least one weekend a month, I would hike with them, always with the gray, Norton

edition of Pendlebury’s *Archaeology of Crete* in my backpack. Those weekends taught me so much more than just topography. Not only did I learn the correct (Cretan) way to eat snails, but also such things as how to identify a person’s village from the colors on a *sakouli* (woven rucksack). The reds from Kritsa were more crimson, those from Anogia were darker.

It was through Anogia that I made my first “climb” with EOS to the summit of Mt. Psiloritis (*Timios Stavros*; Fig. 3). In those days this required a weekend excursion from Heraklion that began with a bus ride to Yeni Gavé (a village now called Drosia) and a stop at one of its roadside restaurants for the best spit-roasted pork I have ever tasted. We spent the first night at a *stani* (sheepfold) above Anogia, sleeping in a *mitato* (dry-laid stone “hut”) built like a Minoan tholos tomb. It was part shelter and part rustic cheese factory. Built strong enough to block the driving winds that swept across the northern face of Psiloritis, yet intentional gaps were left in the masonry to allow the air to circulate around cheeses that sat aging in their *toupakia* (straw baskets) on rudimentary shelving. The 360° view from the Stavros summit (2,456 m asl) was exhilarating.

But I digress, as I often do. The next day, Tom, Kostas, and I had lunch overlooking the remote beach at Kato Zakros before tasting the wines at the Toplou Monastery and visiting the archaeological museum in Siteia. One of the exhibits showcased finds from the island of Kouphonisi (ancient *Leuke*) located off the southeastern coast of Crete. The Roman theater there had been mostly covered with sand when I noted it in my very first publication over a half-century ago (*Archeologia Classica* XXIV, 1972). The museum is excellent (Fig. 4).

Certainly, Crete has undergone a multitude of changes since my early visits, but it was so comforting to know that the spirit of this beautiful island is still very much alive. Athenaeus must be very happy. And, whether we share a life-long fascination with the culture of Crete, or you have just recently become interested in the subject, please give some thought to joining us on the Minotage tour next May. For more information, see p. 4 and also <https://instapstudycenter.net/2023/06/22/minotage>.



Figure 3. Proof of summiting Psiloritis! Photo by author.



Figure 4. Al views the exhibit on Kouphonisi (ancient *Leuke*) at the Archaeological Museum of Siteia. Photo by Tom Brogan.

Local Support for the Study Center's Fellowships

Kostas Chalikias

Secretary, Friends of INSTAP SCEC

Over the past 27 years the Study Center has developed a valuable program to support the field of cultural heritage preservation in East Crete (Fig. 1). Aside from its contribution to Aegean Bronze Age research, the Study Center helps to fuel local economic and cultural activity in the communities of Pacheia Ammos, Kavousi, and Mochlos. Residents know about the Study Center's work from lectures, educational programs, guided tours, and its involvement in local excavations of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Lasithi and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

With that in mind we decided to approach local businesses and other entities to encourage them to support our fellowship and internship programs. The response to our call to action was overwhelmingly positive with 29 businesses participating including restaurants, hotels, a gas station, hardware store, paper factory, large European bank, and even a beekeeper. All donors were particularly eager to make a contribution, knowing that the fellows and interns who spend up to two months working at the Study Center, always stay at local hotels, eat in local restaurants, and shop at local businesses, thus benefiting the local economy.

We see this fundraising initiative as the beginning of a new partnership between the Study Center and local stakeholders



Figure 1. Front entrance of the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete. Photo Tom Brogan.

who are invested in supporting our internship program and the local cultural heritage. In the coming months we plan to expand our collaboration with local companies and various other entities. We will thank our local partners with guided tours of the Study Center, and we promise to keep them up to date on exciting news from the Study Center.



For information about upcoming lectures, recent publications, and SCEC news, join the Friends of the INSTAP Study Center Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/4353522511378183>

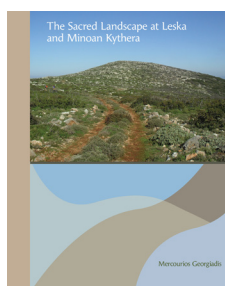


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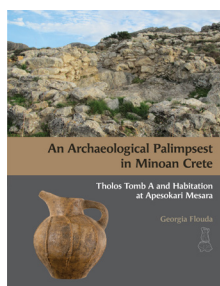
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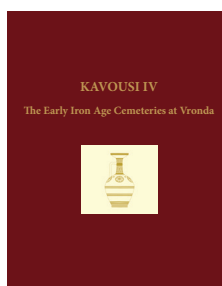
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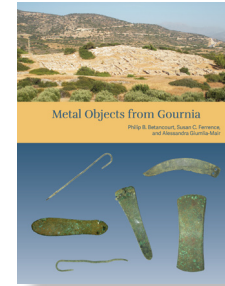
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Join us on Crete in May 2024!

We invite you on a unique, eight-night, luxury tour of Minoan archaeological sites and modern wineries working with legacy grapes on the beautiful island of Crete.

As a semi-retired archaeologist who has been a member of the Society of Wine Educators for over twenty years, I am eager to share my knowledge and passion with you along with my colleagues, archaeologists Tom Brogan and Kostas Chalikias, next spring.

- Enjoy structured tastings of legacy wines crafted where Minoan viticulture was born over 5,000 years ago.
- Savor excellent meals and wines at restaurants serving only the freshest, healthiest ingredients.
- Visit two of the most impressive Minoan sites, Phaistos and Knossos, the latter with the site's curator, and explore several less-visited archaeological sites with the very people who excavated them.
- Stay at two luxurious 5-star hotels. Travel with archaeologists and an expert tour manager/local guide who will accompany the group and handle all the logistics.
- All of this supports the archaeological and historical research of the Institute for Aegean Prehistory Study Center for East Crete.

- Al Leonard



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& the Heritage Wines of Crete**

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For reservations or more information call Eos Study Tours: (800) 856-8951 • eos@studytours.org



WINE QUIZ

Wines made on the beautiful island of Crete have been famous since antiquity. Excavations by the Institute for Aegean Prehistory Study Center for East Crete have traced the history of Cretan wines back 5,000 years. Romans were especially fond of Cretan wines, and the merchants of Venice prized them above all others. Today they consistently win medals at international wine fairs and regularly appear in prestigious wine magazines such as *Decanter* and *The Wine Spectator*.

How well do you know Cretan Wines?

Below are 14 wine grape varieties (listed alphabetically) that are considered to be indigenous to, or historically associated with, the Great Island. How well do you know them? Place a check mark in the box associated with each of the ones that you have tasted.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assyrtiko | <input type="checkbox"/> Melissaki |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athiri | <input type="checkbox"/> Muscat Spiná |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dafni | <input type="checkbox"/> Plyto |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kotsifali | <input type="checkbox"/> Romeiko |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ladikino | <input type="checkbox"/> Thrapsathiri |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liatiko | <input type="checkbox"/> Vidiano |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mandilari | <input type="checkbox"/> Vilana |

How did you do?

If you have checked fewer than three grapes, you have some catching up to do, but the catching up will be a most enjoyable experience! And what could be more enjoyable than doing that catching up on Crete: at the vineyards that produced these wines, and the archaeological sites that place them in their historical perspective. The QR Code on the reverse side will introduce you to such an experience in May of 2024: an immersion in the history, wines, food, and beauty of Crete. It is a fundraising tour conducted by the INSTAP Study Center for East Crete, to help support their fellowship programs. We call it *MINOTAGE: The Legacy of the Minoans & the Heritage Wines of Crete*. It will be educational, entertaining and, most of all, fun!

Come join us.