

GARETH OWENS

MINOAN DI-KA-TA*

The current excavations of the British School at Athens at Palaikastro in East Crete are continuing to reveal an important Minoan site,¹ a harbour town with impressive architecture, rich finds, and a few Linear A inscriptions.² It has been claimed that “the rich Minoan town underlying the later sanctuary of Diktaian Zeus may once itself have been named Dikta”;³ but what will be discussed here is simply whether the Bronze Age word *di-ka-ta* can be equated with Minoan Palaikastro.⁴

I start with the premise that a study of Minoan and Mycenaean *di-ka-ta* must be based on the Bronze Age epigraphic evidence, not on later Classical sources and inscriptions to Diktaian Zeus. It is therefore proposed here to examine the Linear A and Linear B occurrences of the word *di-ka-ta*.

di-ka-ta in Linear B

di-ka-ta occurs five times in Linear B on the following tablets:

<i>di-ka-ta-de</i>	KN	Fh 5467.a	Fp 7.2	F 866	G 7509.1
<i>di-ka-ta-jo</i>	KN	Fp 1+31.2			

* I wish to express my gratitude to the following individuals for their assistance in the preparation of this article which was carried out with the aid of a “Council of Europe” Post-Doctoral Fellowship from the Hellenic Ministry of Education: Dr. S. Constantinidou of the University of Ioannina, Dr. A. Kalogeropoulou of the Hellenic State Scholarship Foundation, Dr. A. Karetsou of Heraklion Museum, and Ms. Kalliope Nikolidaki.

¹ See BSA 86, 1991, 121–147 for the most recent report on the excavations at Palaikastro, and for a bibliography covering the important British School at Athens excavations there from 1901–06, 1962–63 and from 1986 to present.

² There are just five Linear A inscriptions from Palaikastro and eleven from Petsophas.

³ See BSA 83, 1988, 37–44 for the identification of Minoan Palaikastro as Dikta, based on Classical sources and inscriptions. A discussion of Apollonios Rhodios’ description of Crete is interesting but not convincing for identifying a Bronze Age toponym. It has long been known that confusion existed by the Classical period regarding Dikte, Ida and the mythology associated with Zeus on Crete. The excavators’ belief that the Minoan settlement of Palaikastro was *di-ka-ta* was re-iterated in their article in: L’Habitat Egéen Préhistorique, BCH supplement XIX, 1990, 395 n. 1.

⁴ The first point against Crowther’s identification is that no Linear B toponym can be placed east of Lasithi.