

**Invocatio and Imprecatio: the Hymn to the Greatest Kouros from Palaikastro and the oath in ancient Crete\***

Ἰὼ μέγιστε Κούρε, χαίρέ μοι, Κρόνειε,  
πογκρατὲς γάνους, βέβακες δαυμόνων ἀγκόμενος·  
Δίκταν ἐς ἐνιαυτὸν ἔρπε, καὶ γέγαθι μολπᾶ·

St. 1

τὰν τοι κρέκομεν πακτίσι μείζοντες ἄμ' ἀλύοισιν  
καὶ στάντες ἀείδομεν τὸν ἀμφὶ βωμὸν εὐερκῆ.

REFRAIN

St. 2

ἔνθα γάρ σε, παῖδ' ἀμβροτον, ἀσπίδ[ . . . . . ]  
πᾶρ ῥέας λαβόντες πόδα κ[- - - - -]

REFRAIN

St. 3

[- - - - -]  
[- - - - -]ας καλᾶς ῥ' Ἀῶς.

REFRAIN

St. 4

[ . . . . . ]βύρων κατήτος, καὶ βροτὸς Δίκτα κατήχε  
[ . . . . . ]ῆπε ζώ<v> ἄ φίλοβος Εἰρήνα.

REFRAIN

St. 5

ἀ[μὼν δὲ θόρ' ἐς ποί]μνια, καὶ θόρ' εὐποκ' ἐς [μῆ]λα,  
[κὲς λά]ϊα καρπῶν θόρε. κὲς τελεσφ[ύρος οἴκος].

REFRAIN

St. 6

[θόρε κὲς] πόληας ἀμῶν, θόρε κὲς ποντοπόρος νᾶας.  
θόρε κὲς ν[έος πο]λείτας, θόρε κὲς θέμιν κλ[εῖταν].

REFRAIN<sup>1</sup>

The hymn to the Greatest Kouros from Palaikastro, Crete, has occasioned considerable debate among students of choral lyric and ancient Greek religion since its discovery in 1904. The god invoked as the greatest *kouros* has been identified with Zeus Diktaios in whose sanctuary at Palaikastro the hymn was discovered. The hymn as we have it is a second or third century AD copy of a late fourth or third century BC composition.<sup>2</sup> As is so often the case in Cretan studies, Minoan antecedents for the cult of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro and for the hymn have been suggested and explored. Indeed, a Minoan background to the cult of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro and the hymn has come to be accepted as a fact which discussion of the theological and performative aspects of the hymn must take into account. Attention has focused upon two ritual patterns whose origins are sought in the Bronze Age: (1) the invocation of the *eniautos daimon* during an annual festival of

agricultural renewal;<sup>3</sup> and (2) male initiation.<sup>4</sup> R.F. Willetts argued that the influence of a Minoan god of agricultural renewal was extended in the Greek period to renewal of all sorts including that of the citizen population.<sup>5</sup> Willetts did, however, propose a Minoan background for the practice described by Ephorus *ap. Str.* x 4.21 which was quite clearly initiatory in nature. He suggested that the Greatest Kouros of the hymn represented the young initiate (the *kleinos* or *parastathentes*) described by Ephorus.<sup>6</sup> Recent scholarship adduces iconographic evidence for Minoan rituals of male initiation and suggests that these rituals lie behind the cult of Zeus Diktaios.<sup>7</sup>

Curiously enough, little attention has been directed to the historical context of the hymn. Without denying the possibility that Bronze Age religious sensibilities and practices may be detected in the cult of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro, I hope to demonstrate that regard for the nature and function of the sanctuary and cult of Zeus Diktaios in its Hellenistic context has much to contribute to our appreciation of the language of the hymn and the ritual occasion for its performance. Four lines of inquiry will be pursued in the discussion which follows: (1) similarities between the language of contemporary Cretan oaths of alliance and citizenship and the language of strophes 5 and 6 of the hymn; (2) the function of extra-urban border sanctuaries such as the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro; (3) the ritual occasions for oath taking in ancient Crete; and (4) the special appeal which the argumentum and strophe 4 in particular may have had at the time of the hymn's composition.

#### I. THE LANGUAGE OF THE OATH

The hymn's structure follows the standard hymnal pattern of *invocatio* (the refrain and strophe 1), *argumentum* (strophes 2, 3, and 4), and *petitio* (strophes 5 and 6).<sup>8</sup> With strophe 5 the hymn turns from the *argumentum*, a narration of the myth of the birth and childhood of Zeus (strophes 2 and 3) and description of a past golden age (strophe 4), to the *petitio*. The choristers summon the god to leap into or fertilize (θόρ' ἔς) the

<sup>3</sup> M.P. Nilsson, *Minoan-Mycenaean religion and its survival in Greek religion* (Lund 1950) 533-83, esp. 546-56; Bowra (n. 2) 196; M.L. West, 'The Dictaean hymn to the Kouros', *JHS* lxxxv (1965) 156-57; P. Warren, 'Minoan Crete and ecstatic religion', in *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age: proceedings of the first international symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens*, ed. R. Hägg and N. Marinatos (Stockholm 1981) 164. Cf. H. Verbruggen, *Le Zeus crétois* (Paris 1981) 105.

<sup>4</sup> J.E. Harrison, 'The Kouretes and Zeus Kouros: a study in prehistoric sociology', *BSA* xv (1908-1909) 308-38.

<sup>5</sup> R.F. Willetts, *Cretan cults and festivals* (New York 1962) 211-14; *Ancient Crete: a social history* (London/Toronto 1965) 120-24.

<sup>6</sup> Willetts 1962 (n. 5) 116-17.

<sup>7</sup> R.B. Koehl, 'The Chieftain Cup and a Minoan rite of passage', *JHS* cvi (1986) 99-110; H. Sackett and S. MacGillivray, 'Boyhood of a god', *Archaeology* xlii (1989) 31.

<sup>8</sup> J.M. Bremer, 'Greek hymns', in *Faith, hope and worship: aspects of religious mentality in the ancient world*, ed. H.S. Versnel (Leiden 1981) 193-215, esp. 193-97; W.H. Race, 'Aspects of rhetoric and form in Greek hymns', *GRBS* xxiii (1982) 5-14.

\* An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the annual meeting of the American Philological Society, San Francisco, CA, 1990. I would like to thank L. Dean-Jones, B. Goff, the editor of *JHS*, and the three anonymous referees for their criticism and suggestions. Shortcomings which remain are of course my own.

<sup>1</sup> I have followed the text of M. Guarducci, *IC* iii 2.2, and 'Ancora sull' inno cretese a Zeus Dicteo', in *Antichità Cretesi: studi in onore di Doro Levi* ii (Catania 1974) 36-38 (for the new restorations in strophe 5).

<sup>2</sup> See G. Murray, 'The hymn of the Kouretes', *BSA* xv (1908-1909) 364-65. Cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Griechische Verskunst*<sup>2</sup> (repr. Darmstadt 1958) 502 and C.M. Bowra, *On Greek margins* (Oxford 1970) 197.

herds ([ποί]μνια), fleecy flocks (εὐποκα [μῆ]λα), fruitful fields ([λάι]α καρπῶν) and homes rich in offspring (τελεσφ[όροι οἴκοι]).<sup>9</sup> θόρ' ἐς has been variously translated 'leap for', 'leap into', 'hasten' and 'spring up into'.<sup>10</sup> But there has been little debate as to the fundamental concern of strophe 5, namely fertility.<sup>11</sup> The final strophe preserves the same formula, but the focus shifts away from the promotion of natural increase to the welfare of the community and calls upon the Greatest Kouros to leap into cities (πόληες), ships ποντοπόροι νᾶες), youthful or new citizens (νεοί πολεῖταις) and θέμις. This somewhat awkward extension in strophe 6 of what is clearly a fertility formula has been explained in terms of ritual accretion or adaptation to social and theological developments.<sup>12</sup>

Two third century BC inscriptions from the east Cretan polis of Itanos (*IC* iii 4.7 and 8) suggest that the *petitio* of strophes 5 and 6 should not be viewed as the product of theological accretion, but might rather reflect the role of the oath in the maintenance of social and political

order.<sup>13</sup> *IC* iii 4.7 appointed the *kosmoi* and priests of Itanos to compose a new civic oath, preserved in *IC* iii 4.8, which all Itanians who wished to enjoy full citizen rights were required to swear. The oath takers promised to refrain from various acts of treachery and sedition including the betrayal of the city (πόλιν τᾶν Ἰτανῶν οὐ προδώσω, lines 9-10), of the Itanian ships (οὐδὲ ναύ[ς] | τᾶς] τῶν Ἰτανῶν προδώσω, lines 12-13), and of the citizens of Itanos ([οὐδὲ] τῶν πολιτᾶν προδώσω | [οὐδὲν]α, lines 14-15). They pledged to perform their civic obligations on the basis of fairness and equality in accordance with the laws (πολιτεο[σέο]μαι δὲ ἐπ' ἴσαι καὶ ὁμοῖαι καὶ θ[ι]ν[ων] κ[αὶ] ἀνθρωπίνων πάντων κα[τὰ] τᾶ τ[ο]υδ[ε] νόμους, lines 28-32). The imprecation follows (lines 38-49). May those who observe the oath be rewarded with the blessings of children (τέκνων ὄνασ[ι]ν γίνεσθαι, line 40), fruitful lands (γᾶν ἐνκαρπο[ν] φέρειν, line 41), and fertile flocks ([πρ[ό]βατα εὐθην[εῖ]ν, lines 41-42). May those who forswear meet with utter destruction (lines 44-49). The text of the oath follows.

*Civic Oath from Itanos (IC iii 4.8)*

- [Θε]ὸς ἀγαθός.  
[τά]δε ὅμοσαν τοῖ Ἰτάνιοι πά[ν]-  
[τε]ς Δία Δικταῖον καὶ Ἡραν καὶ θ-  
4 [εο]υδ[ε] τοὺς ἐν Δίκται καὶ Ἀθαν-  
[α]τᾶν Πολιάδα καὶ θεοὺς ὄσσο[ι]-  
[ς] ἐν Ἀθαναῖαι θύεται πάντας  
[κ]αὶ Δία Ἀγοραῖον καὶ Ἀπόλλω-  
8 [ν]α Πύθιον καθ' ἱερῶν νεοκαύ-  
[τ]ων πόλιν τᾶν Ἰτανῶν οὐ προ[δ]-  
[δ]ωσέω, οὐδὲ χώραν οὐδὲ νά-  
[σ]ου[ς] τᾶς τῶν [Ἰ]τανίων, οὐδὲ  
12 [πολ]εμῖους ἐπαξέω, οὐδὲ ναύ[ς]  
[τᾶς] τῶν Ἰτανίων προδώσέω  
[οὐδὲ] τῶν πολιτᾶν προδώσέω  
[οὐδὲ]ν[α], οὐδὲ χρήματα πολιτ-  
16 [ᾶν, ο]ὐδὲ σύλλογον οὐδὲ συνωμο-  
[σίαν] ποιησέω ἐπὶ τῷ κακίονι τ[ᾶ]-  
[ς] πόλιος ἢ τῶν πολιτᾶν, οὐδὲ ἀλ-  
[λ]ω[ι] συνεσέομαι οὐδενί, αἶ τ[ι]ς  
20 [κα χ]ρήζηι τούτων τι π[ο]ιεῖν, ἀλ-  
[λ'] ἐρέω ποτὶ τοὺς ἀρχοντας· οὐ-  
[δὲ γὰς] ἀναδασμὸν οὐδὲ οἰκίαν  
[οὐδὲ] οἰκοπέδον, οὐδὲ χρεῶν ἀ-  
24 [ποκ]οπᾶν ποιησέω, οὐδὲ δίκαν ἐ-  
[παξέ]ω ξενικᾶν τῶν πολιτᾶν

<sup>9</sup> Guarducci's restoration of ποίμνια followed by μῆλα in strophe 5 has been controversial. West (n. 3) 150, 153-54, believed this sequence to be redundant and preferred instead Murray's (n. 2) 358, 361, σταμνῖα followed by ποίμνια. But Guarducci pointed out that the adjective εὐποκα suggests that the focus is on the product (wool versus meat and milk) rather than on the producer and so the two referents are not redundant. ποίμνια refers to all animals which provide meat and milk, μῆλα more narrowly to sheep which provide wool. For a review of the restorations which have been proposed for this strophe, see Guarducci 1974 (n. 1) 36-37.

<sup>10</sup> 'Leap for': Murray (n. 2) 359, 361; Harrison (n. 4) 337-38; 'leap into' or impregnate: K. Latte, *De saltationibus Graecorum capita quinque* (Giessen 1913) 49; Nilsson (n. 3) 549-50; Bowra (n. 2) 193-95; Guarducci 1974 (n. 9) 36-38; Bremer (n. 8) 206; 'hasten': Verbruggen (n. 3) 106-07; 'spring up into': West (n. 3) 157-59.

<sup>11</sup> Two inscribed gold lamellae recently discovered in a late fourth century BC tomb in the vicinity of ancient Pelinna, Thessaly (K. Tsantsanoglou and G.M. Parassoglou, 'Two gold leaves from Thessaly', *Ἑλληνικά* xxxviii [1987] 3-16; *SEG* xxxvii 497), provide intriguing comparanda for the use of θρόσσω εἰς in a ritual matrix which does not stress fertility. The two new leaves preserve an expanded variation of the previously attested formula ξριφος ἐς γάλα ξεπετον/ξεπετες. The new leaves read ταῦρος εἰς γάλα ξεθορες | αἰψα εἰς γάλα ξεθορες | κριδς εἰς γάλα ξεπεσε<ς>. Tsantsanoglou and Parassoglou translate both ξεθορες εἰς and ξεπετες εἰς 'rush towards'. They suggest that the lines refer either to the conduct of the deceased as a newborn animal or to the deification and union of the deceased with the theriomorphic god, Dionysus. Although Aly's identification of the hymn to the Greatest Kouros as an Orphic document has met with little support, Nilsson suggested that the Orphic Dionysos was a later reflex of the Minoan divine child and as such was similar in function to the Cretan Zeus (Zeus Diktaios or Kretagenes). See W. Aly, 'Ursprung und Entwicklung der kretischen Zeusreligion', *Philologus* lxxi (1912) 457-78, esp. 472; Nilsson (n. 3) 564-83, esp. 579.

<sup>12</sup> Nilsson (n. 3) 549-50 suggested that the use of the formula in strophe 5 was meant to be understood literally while in strophe 6 the use was figurative. See also Bowra (n. 2) 194-95. Cf. Verbruggen (n. 3) 106-07 and West (n. 3) 158, 'It is evident that "spring up" has become (sc. in the Hellenistic period) a stereotyped prayer in the cult of the Kouros, and that his influence has outgrown its original bounds.'

<sup>13</sup> The inscriptions have been dated on the basis of letter forms. But S. Spyridakis, *Ptolemaic Itanos and Hellenistic Crete* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1970) 73-75, may well be right to connect the crisis reflected in the oath with the civil unrest at Itanos which is mentioned in the Itanian decrees in honor of Patroklos, the *strategos* of Ptolemy II Philadelphos, for his help in preserving the Itanian regime (πολιτευομένων τῶν Ἰτανῶν κατὰ τοὺς νόμους, *IC* iii 4.2, lines 13-15; 3, lines 5-6). Patroklos' expedition to Crete is dated to the period 270-260 BC. See M. Guarducci, *IC* iii, p. 81; Spyridakis 70, n. 5.

- [οὔδε]νι ἐριθεοτᾶν παρεορέσι οὐ-  
[δεμ]ῆι. οὐδὲ βουλευσέω περὶ τᾶ-  
28 [ς πόλ]ιος κακὸν οὐδὲν, πολιτεο-  
[σέο]μαι δὲ ἐπ' ἴσα καὶ ὁμοῖα καὶ θ[ν]-  
[ων κ]αὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πάντων κα-  
[τὰ τ]οὺς νόμους τοῦς προὔπα-  
32 [ρχ]οντας ὄσσοις χρεώμεθα περὶ[ι]  
[τὰ] θίνα καὶ τοὺς νῦν ἐθέμεθα κ[αί]  
[κά] τινας ἄλλους ὕστερον θεώ-  
[μ]εθα ἢ περὶ τὰ . . . ] πολ[ι]-  
36 [τι]κά· καὶ οὐδ' προ[ο]λειψέ[ω] τᾶν πολιτε[ι]-  
αν οὔτε ἐ[ν] πολέ[μ]ωι οὔτε ἐν εἰ[ρ]-  
ῆναι κατὰ τὸ δ[ι]ν[α]τόν. τοῖς δ' εἰ[ϋ]-  
ορκέοσι καὶ κατέχουσι τὸν [δρ]-  
40 [κο]ν τέκνων ὄνασι[ν] γίνεσθ[αι]  
[κ]αὶ γᾶν ἔνκαρπο[ν] φ[έ]ρειν καὶ [πρ]-  
[ό]βατα εὐθην[εῖ]ν κα[ὶ] ἄλλα πολ[λ]-  
α καὶ ἀγαθὰ γίνεσθ[αι] κα[ὶ] αὐτῶ[ι]  
44 [κ]αὶ τοῖς τέκνο[ι]ς, τοῖς δὲ ἐπιορκέ-  
[ο]σι μῆτε γᾶν φέρειν μῆτε τέκν-  
[ω]ν ὄνασιν γίνεσθαι μῆτε πρό-  
[β]α[τα] εὐθηνεῖν, ἐξόλλυσθαι δὲ  
48 [κα]κῶς κακοῦς καὶ αὐτοῦς καὶ γ-  
[εν]εᾶν αὐτῶν.

In several respects, the civic oath of Itanos and the hymn to the Greatest Kouros reveal striking similarities. The language of strophe 5 of the hymn may be compared with the language of the *imprecatio* of the oath. Both passages invoke divine aid to ensure the future well-being of the *oikos* (hymn: τελεσφ[ό]ροι οἴκοι; oath: τέκνων ὄνασι[ν] γίνεσθ[αι]), the earth (hymn: [λά]ϊα καρπῶν; oath: γᾶν ἔνκαρπο[ν] φ[έ]ρειν) and the flocks (hymn: [πο]ίμνια, εὐποκα [μῆ]λα; oath: [πρ]όβατα εὐθην[εῖ]ν).<sup>14</sup> The correspondence between what the oath takers pledged to protect (city, ships, citizens, and law and order) and what the choristers asked the Greatest Kouros to increase in strophe 6 (cities, ships, citizens and θέμις) is perhaps more notable. While parallels from Cretan oaths can be adduced for the curse language of *IC* iii 4.8,<sup>15</sup> this is not the case for the promissory clauses which are less formulaic and seem to reflect local or topical concerns. For example, in the only other civic oath from Crete, the 3rd or 2nd century BC oath from Dreros, the oath takers promised to injure the Lyktians, aid the Knossians, and remain faithful to the city of Dreros and the Drierian frontier (*IC* i 9.1, lines 36-60).<sup>16</sup> Finally, Zeus Diktaios, the god invoked as the Greatest Kouros in the hymn,

<sup>14</sup> The order is reversed: hymn: flocks, earth, household; oath: household, earth, flocks.

<sup>15</sup> See *IC* i 9.1, lines 75-94; ii 5.23; iii 3.5, lines 22-26; 6.7, lines 36-39; iv 174, lines 83-85; *BE*, (1970) 471. For an abbreviated formula, see *IC* i 16.5, lines 82-83; 18.9C, lines 14-15; ii 17.1, lines 20-22; iii 3 3A, lines 89-90; 3B, lines 23-25; iv 185, line 5; *SEG* xxvi 1049, lines 89-90.

<sup>16</sup> For promissory clauses in alliance oaths from Crete, see *IC* i 16.5, lines 76-82; i 18.9C, lines 7-14; iii 3.3B, lines 15-17, 21-23; iii 3.5, lines 15-22; iii 6.7, lines 17-23; iv 174, lines 77-82; iv 185, lines 1-5; *SEG* xxiii 547, lines 54-59; xxiii 563, lines 16-18; xxvi 1049, lines 86-89; *BE* 1970, no. 471B, lines 12-17.

heads the list of oath gods from Itanos.<sup>17</sup> It is almost as though *IC* iii 4.8 and the hymn's *petitio* preserve the same text written in two different ritual languages.

The civic oath served to 'mark the transition from private status to public role' as the new citizen promised to fulfill his 'public responsibilities and disregard private interest'.<sup>18</sup> By means of the *imprecatio*, the oath taker pledged his *oikos* as security. One aspect of the nexus of public and private life in the ancient Greek *polis* is thus clearly articulated. The welfare of the community depended upon the denial of self interest by the oath taker whose fundamental allegiance was to the preservation of his *oikos*. By fulfilling his public obligations as promised the oath taker secured the good will of the oath gods for his household. The *petitio* of the hymn to the Greatest Kouros may be understood to enunciate a similar pattern of thought linking the welfare of the *oikos* (strophe 5) and the *polis* (strophe 6).

## II. THE SANCTUARY OF ZEUS DIKTAIOS

The sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro in east Crete occupied much of the plain known today as Roussolakkos where excavations conducted by the British School at Athens have revealed the remains of an extensive Minoan town.<sup>19</sup> The sanctuary was probably founded in the eighth century BC.<sup>20</sup> Fragments of LM I bull's head rhyta recovered beneath the ash deposits of the altar of Zeus Diktaios have been understood to suggest that the geometric period witnessed the refoundation of a Minoan cult which had been shifted away from Palaikastro during the intervening centuries. More recently, the discovery at Palaikastro of fragments belonging to a LM I chryselephantine statue of a young, beardless god have been interpreted as compelling evidence in favor of the survival there of Bronze Age ritual patterns into and beyond the Dark Age.<sup>21</sup> The fragments of the statue were found northwest of the

<sup>17</sup> The listing order of gods in oaths seems to reflect the relative importance of those gods in the community. See e.g. Willetts 1962 (n. 5) 206-08. Zeus Diktaios occupies a leading position in the lists of oath gods from two other east Cretan *poleis*. His name heads the list of gods in an alliance oath of Praisos (*IC* iii 6.7A, lines 15-16) and comes third in the alliance oaths of Hierapytna (*IC* iii 3.5, lines 11-12; *SEG* xxvi 1049, line 83).

<sup>18</sup> S.C. Humphreys, *The family, women and death* (London 1983) 1. Oaths of office and dicasts' oaths performed a similar function.

<sup>19</sup> For the extent of the temenos and sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios, see C. Crowther, 'A note on Minoan Dikta', *BSA* lxxxiii (1988) 43-44. In the Hellenistic period the boundary of the sanctuary was clearly articulated by a peribolos wall (*IC* iii 4.9, lines 69-71) stretches of which have been uncovered (R.C. Bosanquet, 'Excavations at Palaikastro. IV. 8. The temple of Dictaeon Zeus', *BSA* xi [1904-1905] 298-99).

<sup>20</sup> *Per ep.* James Whitley. The date is based on the typology of bronze votive tripod handles from the sanctuary.

<sup>21</sup> J.A. MacGillivray, L.H. Sackett *et al.*, 'Excavations at Palaikastro, 1987', *BSA* lxxxiii (1988) 267; J.A. MacGillivray, L.H. Sackett *et al.*, 'Excavations at Palaikastro, 1988', *BSA* lxxxiv (1989) 426-27; Sackett and MacGillivray (n. 7) 27-29; J.A. MacGillivray, 'The Therans and Dikta', in D.A. Hardy *et al.* eds., *Thera and the Aegean world III. vol. i Archaeology: proceedings of the Third International Congress. Santorini. Greece. 3-9 September 1989* (London 1990) 366-68.

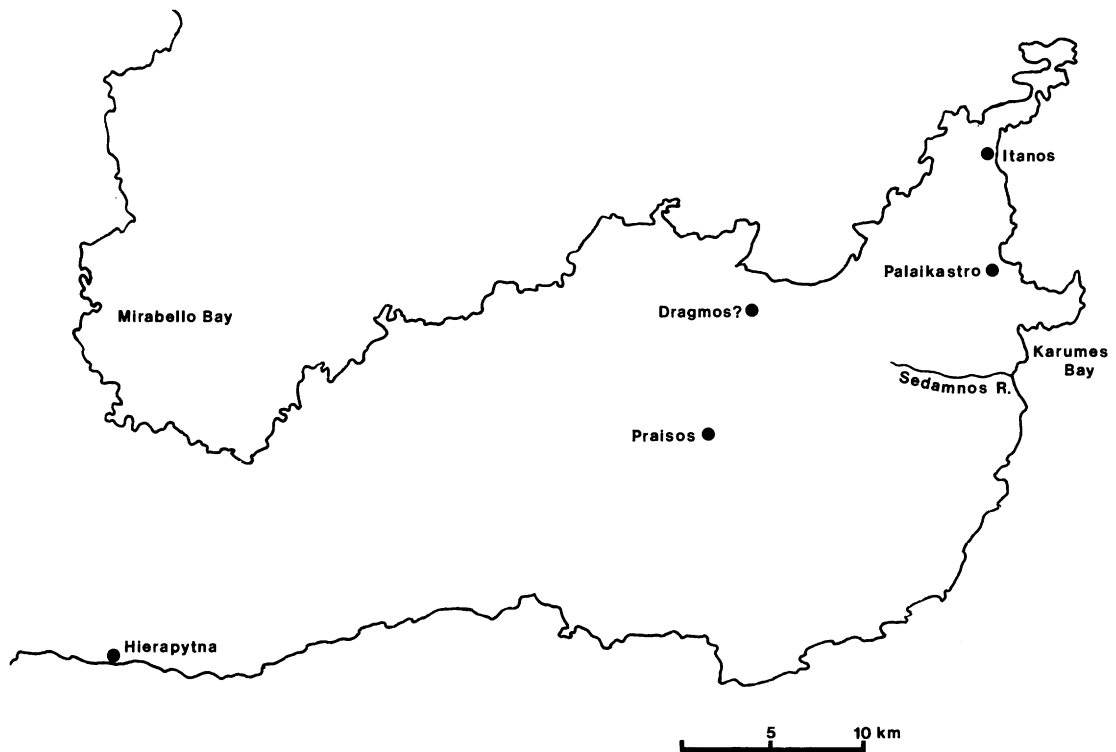


FIG. 1 EAST CRETE

temple and altar of Zeus Diktaios in the vicinity of a cluster of five buildings tentatively identified by the excavators as a Minoan religious complex.<sup>22</sup> While a connection between the evidence for Minoan cult activity in the vicinity of the later temple and altar of Zeus Diktaios and the Minoan ritual complex to the northwest cannot be established, there is good reason to argue that the Minoan name of the settlement at Palaikastro was Dikta.<sup>23</sup> The young, beardless god of the chryselephantine statue may then be identified as the forerunner of Zeus Diktaios whose statue was said to be beardless.<sup>24</sup>

The decision to establish the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro in the eighth century BC may, however, have been motivated by factors quite apart from the tradition of the worship there of a young god kept alive for centuries by the descendants of the Minoans from Dikta. In the second century BC the sanctuary lay at the southeastern frontier of Itanos (FIG. 1). The role played by this and other Cretan extra-urban border sanctuaries in interstate relations has been recognized in the past,<sup>25</sup> but the political character of such sanctuaries has not been brought to bear upon the

question of the origins of the worship of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro. François de Polignac has argued that the defining moment, politically and sociologically, in the formation of the *polis* was the establishment of sanctuaries at its two spatial poles, the *astu* and the frontier.<sup>26</sup> The significance attached by de Polignac to the establishment of sanctuaries at the territorial *eschata* of developing *poleis* during the eighth and seventh centuries BC may be apposite to the early history of the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios. Perhaps the establishment of the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro should be understood not only as the reflection of a prehistoric tradition, but also as part of the process of *polis* formation.

We cannot, to be sure, reconstruct the geopolitical organization of east Crete in the 8th century BC. Who controlled the sanctuary at the time of its foundation remains uncertain. Strabo (x 4.6, 12) reported that the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios was located at Praisos, citing Staphylos of Naucratis as his source in the first passage. Bosanquet identified this sanctuary with the one on Altar Hill at Praisos and adduced similarities in the votive material and architectural terracottas found at Palaikastro and in the sanctuary on Altar Hill at Praisos in support of his view that the cult was moved inland to the Eteocretan community at Praisos when Palaikastro was abandoned towards the end of the 2nd millennium BC and was subsequently re-established there by the Prais-

<sup>22</sup> MacGillivray and Sackett 1989 (n. 22) 444-45.

<sup>23</sup> Crowther (n. 20) 37-44.

<sup>24</sup> *Et. Mag.* sv. Δίκτη.

<sup>25</sup> A. Brelich, *Guerre, agoni e culti nella grecia arcaica* (Bonn 1961) 60-73; Spyridakis (n. 13) 53-54; H. Van Effenterre, 'Les frontieres de Lato', *KrChr* xxi (1969) 48; A. Chaniotis, 'Habgierige Götter, habgierige Städte. Heiligtumsbesitz und Gebietsanspruch in den kretischen Staatsverträgen', *Ktema* xiii [1988] (1992) 21-39.

<sup>26</sup> F. de Polignac, *La naissance de la cité grecque* (Paris 1984) 41-92.

ians.<sup>27</sup> Others have maintained that the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios referred to by Strabo should be identified with the one at Palaikastro and that the identity of the deity (or deities) worshipped on Altar Hill at Praisos remains unknown.<sup>28</sup> Even so, the reported similarity in votives and architectural terracottas may indicate as Bosanquet suggested that the sanctuaries at Praisos and Palaikastro were 'controlled by the same body or embellished by the same worshippers'.<sup>29</sup> And Strabo's statement might just as well be understood to mean that the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios lay within Praisian territory (at Palaikastro) as that the sanctuary was located on Altar Hill or elsewhere in the *astu*. There remains, of course, the question to what period this passage refers.<sup>30</sup>

In 112 BC, the consul L. Calpurnius Piso asked the city of Magnesia on the Maeander to arbitrate a dispute between Itanos and Hierapytna concerning the ownership of the land bordering upon the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios. The decision of the Magnesian board of arbitrators (*IC* iii 4.9) recounted the background to the immediate disagreement. The Itanians supported their claim against Hierapytna that they had inherited lands bordering upon the sanctuary from their ancestors by demonstrating that their southern border extended south of the sanctuary and that this had been the case since the time when they shared the border with Dragmos (*IC* iii 4.9, 37-42, 54-61).<sup>31</sup> The date of the agreement between Itanos and Dragmos is uncertain. Nor do we know whether that agreement changed the course of their border or merely recognized the *status quo*. Praisos subsequently absorbed Dragmos, but the southern border of Itanos did not change (*IC* iii 4.9, lines 61-65). Later still (145-140 BC), Hierapytna destroyed Praisos.<sup>32</sup> Itanos claimed that her southern border was not affected by the absorption of Praisos by Hierapytna (*IC* iii 4.9, lines 65-67).

The Itanians attributed the successful defense of their borders from Praisian expansion to Ptolemaic support (*IC* iii 4.9, lines 37-42). Mention has already been made of the honors Itanos awarded Patroklos, the *strategos* of

Ptolemy II Philadelphos, for helping to preserve the laws and territory (τὸν χώραν μετὰ πάσας ἀσφαλείας νέμονται) of Itanos.<sup>33</sup> It is tempting to suggest that Patroklos led the Ptolemaic support of Itanian interests mentioned in *IC* iii 4.9. If so, the date of Patroklos' intervention (270-260 BC) might provide the *terminus ante quem* for the absorption of Dragmos by Praisos. Indeed, an agreement between Praisos and the communities of Seteia and Stalai (*IC* iii 6.7) suggests that Praisos had already begun to expand and consolidate her territory by the beginning of the third century BC.<sup>34</sup> The agreement between Itanos and Dragmos may then date to at least the first part of the third century BC if not earlier. Henceforth, the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios lay within the territory of Itanos.

In conclusion, considerations of territorial definition and protection may have contributed to the decision to establish the sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios at Palaikastro. We cannot determine with certainty whose borders the sanctuary originally served to define and protect, although on present evidence Praisos seems the likeliest candidate. In the second century BC the sanctuary lay within the territory of Itanos near her southeast border. The stability of the frontier of Itanos throughout the third and second centuries BC despite the territorial expansion, first of Praisos at the expense of the communities of Seteia, Stalai and Dragmos, and later of Hierapytna at the expense of Praisos, suggests that it is at least possible that the sanctuary belonged to Itanos at the time of the hymn's composition.

### III. THE RITUAL OCCASIONS OF OATH-TAKING ON CRETE

What little we learn from the hymn itself concerning the ritual occasion of its performance we learn from the refrain and the first strophe. At an annual festival of Zeus Diktaios, the choristers sang this ὕμνος κλητικός as they stood in a circle around the god's altar. There is little reason to suggest, as many have, that in ritual *mimesis* the choristers assumed the role of the Kouretes of myth who danced the Πυρρικός χορός around the infant Zeus and that at the intonation of θόρε the choristers leaped in sympathy with the god whose leap they invoked.<sup>35</sup> The periodicity of the ritual, the identification of Zeus Diktaios as an *eniautos daimon* and the language of strophes 5 and 6 have been invoked in support of the *opinio communis* that the ritual celebrated the annual renewal of the agricultural cycle. Some have followed Jane Ellen Harrison's suggestion that the ritual celebrated not only agricultural renewal, but also the

<sup>27</sup> R.C. Bosanquet, 'The Palaikastro hymn of the Kouretes,' *BSA* xv (1908-1909) 351; 'Dicte and the temples of Dictaeon Zeus,' *BSA* xl (1939-1940) 60-77. As pointed out by Y. Duhoux, *L'Étéocrèteois: les textes, la langue* (Amsterdam 1982) 59, settlement at Praisos was sparse before the eighth century BC.

<sup>28</sup> See e.g. M. Guarducci, *IC* iii, p. 135. J. Whitley confirms *per ep.* that there is no compelling argument in favor of the attribution of the cult on Altar Hill to Zeus Diktaios.

<sup>29</sup> Bosanquet 1939-1940 (n. 28) 66. M. Prent and S. Thorne inform me that architectural terracottas from the same molds as those found at Praisos and Palaikastro have been identified at sites in central Crete as well. Their observation suggests that the similarity in architectural terracottas may not bear the political implications which Bosanquet favored.

<sup>30</sup> Jacoby, *FGH* iiiia comm., pp. 211-12, placed Staphylos of Naucratis in the first half of the third century BC. Staphylos' interest in the organization of east Crete is intriguing in light of Ptolemaic influence in the region at that time.

<sup>31</sup> The southern border of the territory of Itanos followed the course of the Sedamnos river (modern Kochlakies?) which emptied into Karumes bay about five kilometers south of Palaikastro. For the location of Dragmos and of the border of Itanos, see P. Faure, 'Nouvelles localisations de villes crétoises', *KrChr* xvii (1963) 18.

<sup>32</sup> M. Guarducci, iii, pp. 91-92; Spyridakis (n. 13) 56-57.

<sup>33</sup> See n. 13.

<sup>34</sup> *IC* iii 6.7 has been dated by letter form to the early third century BC. Praisos emerges as the dominant party in this agreement. See F. Gschnitzer, 'Zu einem Geschäftstyp des griechischen Völkerrechts', *Symposion 1971* (Köln/Vienna 1975) 79-102.

<sup>35</sup> See e.g. Warren (n. 3) 164, 'Just such a purpose (*sc.* to promote the annual renewal of the fertility of the natural world) also lay behind the orgiastic dancing rituals of the god of fertility so fully described in the Palaikastro Hymn to Diktaian Zeus...' For the connection between the Kouretes, the myth of Zeus' birth and childhood and the discovery of the Πυρρικός χορός, see schol. Pind. *Pyth.* ii 127; Str. x 3.7, 4-16. Cf. *POxy* 1241, col. v, lines 22-28; Nik. Dam. *FGH* iia 90F103.

coming-of-age of the choristers.<sup>36</sup> This suggestion leads us back to the association between the hymn and the civic oath of Itanos.

In my earlier comparison of the language of the civic oath from Itanos and the hymn's *petitio* in strophes 5 and 6, I did not argue for a direct relationship between the oath and the hymn. For one thing, the appeal to Zeus to 'come for the year to Dikte' (refrain) suggests that the hymn was recited at an annual festival. May the same be said of the Itanian oath? *IC* iii 4.7 provides for the administration of the Itanian oath. The magistrates were to swear all Itanian citizens who were resident in Itanos to the oath on the appointed day. Itanian citizens not in Itanos on the day of the oath taking were to be sworn to the oath within ten days of their return to Itanos (lines 8-13). Failure to comply with the provisions would result in the loss of full citizen rights (lines 25-28). The surviving portion of the decree does not provide for each year's crop of new citizens to swear the oath.<sup>37</sup> While the annual administration of the civic oath to the graduating ephebes of Itanos is not mentioned elsewhere in the epigraphic record for Itanos, a pattern of ritual practice emerges from the *testimonia* for other Cretan *poleis* where functionally similar swearing-in ceremonies for new citizens were held on an annual basis.<sup>38</sup> The ubiquity of this practice on Crete during the Hellenistic period suggests that the failure to mention the annual swearing-in of the new citizens of Itanos may have been due to the fact that the institution of the new civic oath there did not occasion any administrative changes in this regard. The new oath simply replaced the text of the old.

The third or second century BC citizenship oath from Dreros (*IC* i 9.1), provides a point of departure for our analysis of this pattern. Following a recital of the list of oath gods (lines 15-36), the Drerian ephebes swore to harm the Lyktians and to aid the Drerians and Knossians to the best of their ability (lines 36-60). This conflation of foreign and domestic concerns is similarly brought to bear upon the graduating ephebes in a number of Hellenistic alliances between Cretan *poleis*. In these, the contracting *poleis* agreed to renew the alliance each year on the occasion of a specified festival. The renewal was accomplished by reading aloud the text of the alliance and by swearing the year's crop of graduate ephebes to the alliance oath.<sup>39</sup> The name of the festival varied from

*polis* to *polis*, but at each location it may well have provided the occasion for the graduation ceremony of the community's ephebes and the administration of the civic oath to the new citizens. Alliances were renewed during the Hyperboioi at Hierapytna (*IC* i 8.13; iii 3.4, lines 40-47), Malla (*IC* i 19.1), and possibly Praisos (*IC* iii 3.4), during the Periblema at Lyktos (*IC* i 19.1) and during the Thiodaisioi at Lato (*IC* i 16.5). The initiatory character of the Periblema at Lyktos, the Hyperboioi at Malla and the Thiodaisioi at Lato is evident from the description of the ritual context, for the Periblema and Hyperboioi ναωσάντων ... τὰν ἀγέλαν ἐσδομέναν (*IC* i 19.1, lines 16-18) and for the Thiodaisioi ἐξορκιζάντων ... [τὰς ἀγέλας] ... ἐπει κ' ἐγδρ- <ἀ>μῶντι (*IC* i 16.5, lines 20-21; cf. also *SEG* xxvi 1049, lines 28-29). The civic oath of Dreros was administered to τὰν ἀγέλαν τοῦς τόκα ἐγδουμένουσ (*IC* i 9.1, lines 98-100).

It is within such a ritual context that I would like to situate the performance of the hymn to the Greatest Kouros, during a festival held at the border sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios which celebrated the renewal of the citizen body and of interstate relations. Whose festival we cannot determine with certainty. The choristers' appeal to the Greatest Kouros to 'leap into our cities' (strophe 6) was understood by Wilamowitz as evidence for a religious association of east Cretan cities which shared a common interest in the cult and sanctuary of Zeus Diktaios.<sup>40</sup> Spyridakis invoked this line as evidence for the existence of a political federation of Eteocretan cities in east Crete.<sup>41</sup> Van Effenterre suggested that the publication in Itanos of a treaty between Praisos and Hierapytna early in the third century BC (*IC* iii 4.1) indicated that these three leading cities of east Crete were allies of one another, if not members of a formal federation, at that time.<sup>42</sup>

There is, however, no need to postulate the existence of a religious association or political federation to explain the significance of πόλις in strophe 6. Elsewhere on Crete allies annually renewed their interstate agreements by administering the alliance oath to their new citizens during the festivals which celebrated their transition from ephebe to adult. The similarities between the language of the civic oath of Itanos and of the hymn's *petitio* point to Itanos as the festival's sponsor. I would imagine that the new Itanian citizens swore both the civic oath and the oaths of alliances to which Itanos

<sup>36</sup> Harrison (n. 4); *Themis* (Cambridge 1927) 16-29; Willetts 1962 (n. 5) 221-220; 1965 (n. 5) 119-25; Koehl (n. 7) 104-08.

<sup>37</sup> Approximately three lines are lost at the beginning of the decree. The first surviving lines contain the decree's enabling formula. The date of the enactment should probably be restored at the beginning as the decree mandates the timely performance of its provisions.

<sup>38</sup> For a general discussion of the annual administration of the civic oath to the year's graduating ephebes, see J. Plešcia, *The oath and perjury in ancient Greece* (Tallahassee 1970) 15-24.

<sup>39</sup> The full pattern is preserved in *IC* i 8.13, lines 12-21 (agreement between Knossos and Hierapytna, second century BC); *IC* i 16.5, lines 20-30 (agreement between Lato and Olous, 111/110 BC); *SEG* xxvi 1049, lines 28-39 (agreement between Lato and Hierapytna, 111/110 BC); *IC* i 19.1, lines 16-26 (agreement between Lyttos and Malla, third century BC). Elements of the pattern are found in *IC* iii 3.1B, lines 29-30 (agreement between Hierapytna and the Arkades, third century BC) and *IC* iv 183, lines 1-3 (agreement between Gortyn and

Sybrita, second century BC). Cf. *IC* iii 6.7A, lines 13-15 (agreement between Praisos and Stalai, third century BC), a *kosmos* of Praisos is chosen annually to renew the alliance oath on behalf of the Stalitai.

<sup>40</sup> Wilamowitz (n. 2) 501; accepted by M. Guarducci, *IC* iii, p. 17 and Willetts 1962 (n. 5) 210.

<sup>41</sup> Spyridakis (n. 13) 25.

<sup>42</sup> H. van Effenterre, *La Crète et le monde grec* (Paris 1948) 126-27. Cf. M. Guarducci, *IC* iii, pp. 77, 80; A.J. Reinach, *REG* xxiv (1911) 390-91; Spyridakis (n. 13) 47. That Hierapytna was at one time interested in the maintenance of the sanctuary is indicated by a dedication of the *kosmoi* of Hierapytna recording repairs completed at the sanctuary under their direction (*IC* iii 2.1, late second century BC). For the attribution and date, see Guarducci, *IC* iii, p. 11. This text should perhaps be considered in connection with the disagreement between Itanos and Hierapytna which occasioned the intervention of Magnesia late in the second century BC (*IC* iii 4.9).

was a party during this festival. The hymn's invocation to the god to bless the new citizens (θόρε κέξ ν[έος πο]λεῖτας) together with Itanos and her allies (θόρε κέξ πόληας ἄμῶν) recognized the festival's dual function and perhaps further the presence of officials sent by the allied *poleis* to witness the swearing of the alliance oaths.<sup>43</sup> The location of the sanctuary at the territorial *eschaton* may well explain why such a rite of passage was celebrated there. As demonstrated by de Polignac, the ritual pattern of initiation was frequently expressed in spatial terms by the withdrawal of the celebrants to extra-urban sanctuaries.<sup>44</sup> Together, the sanctuary located at the border and the rite of passage celebrated there helped to preserve the territorial and social integrity of the *polis*.

#### IV. THE ARGUMENTUM

The story of Zeus' birth and childhood is narrated in strophes 2 and 3. The essential elements of the story are set out in the second strophe. The content of the third is irretrievable. With strophe 4 we seem to have left behind the myth of Cretan Zeus. In the past, year after year (κατῆτος), Justice governed men and Peace, the bringer of prosperity, did something. This strophe has been variously understood to reflect Hesiod's Golden Age, an Orphic version of the past, and the spirit of fifth century progressivism.<sup>45</sup> If we read the hymn within its ritual framework and historical context, the language and rhetoric of the fourth strophe seem particularly apposite. What little we know about the social and political conditions in east Crete indicates that the early Hellenistic period was a time of civil and interstate unrest. This is suggested by the revision of the civic oath of Itanos with its clauses concerning treachery and sedition (*IC* iii 4.8), by the role played by Patroklos in protecting the territory of Itanos from external aggression and ensuring the maintenance of political stability there (*IC* iii 4.2 & 3) and by the prehistory to the conflict between Itanos and Hierapytna as outlined in Magnesia's arbitration settlement for these two east Cretan *poleis* (*IC* iii 4.9). Those interested in the preservation of social and political order might well call upon the divine guardian of the oath to ensure compliance by recalling how in the past he brought peace which nurtures prosperity and justice through which peace is maintained.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> The agreements listed in n. 40 above provide that officials from the allied *polis* shall be on hand to witness the annual swearing of the alliance oath by their treaty partners.

<sup>44</sup> De Polignac (n. 27) 66-85. Cf. the promise of the ephebes of Dreros to protect the guard posts presumably located at the borders of the *polis* (*IC* i 9.1, lines 52-53).

<sup>45</sup> Hesiod's Golden Age: West (n. 3) 157-58; Verbruggen (n. 3) 105-06; Orphic history: Bosanquet 1908-1909 (n. 30) 354-56; spirit of fifth century BC progressivism: Bowra (n. 2) 191.

<sup>46</sup> The final three strophes of the hymn do seem to echo the advice given by Hesiod to his brother, Perses, in the *Works and Days*, lines 225-247. There, Peace attends where men give straight judgements and abide by what is just (cf. strophe 4). The earth bears abundant produce, the sheep are rich with wool and women are fertile (cf. strophe 5). When men fail to abide by what is just, famine, infertility and the utter destruction of the *oikos* result (cf. strophe 6).

If we allow such a political reading of the *argumentum*, a rhetorical strategy for the hymn well suited to the ritual context which I have proposed for its performance emerges. The invocation (refrain and strophe 1) serves not only to summon the god but also to establish the spatial and temporal context for the hymn's performance. The Greatest Kouros is asked to come to Dikte ἐξ ἐνιαυτῶν to delight in the hymn.<sup>47</sup> The annual performance of the hymn is echoed by κατῆτος in the *argumentum* (strophe 4). The god who now comes yearly to Dikte in the past year after year brought to mortals Justice and Peace who fosters prosperity. The *petitio* asks the Greatest Kouros to accomplish now what he did unbidden in the past, namely provide the well-being which attends Justice and Peace. The hymn does not aver that Justice and Peace accompany the Greatest Kouros when he comes yearly to Dikte. Rather, it was the function of the ritual context of the hymn to ensure their attendance. The annual replenishment of the citizen body, the oath sworn by the ephebes to protect the *polis*, its *chora*, the citizens and the laws, and the oaths of alliance renewed each year by the new citizens together worked to maintain the social and political climate requisite to the blessings of prosperity and well-being provided by the god.

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<sup>47</sup> If West's suggestion (n. 3) 156, n. 27, that ἐξ ἐνιαυτῶν means 'at year's end' is correct, the celebration of the festival is more likely to have been coordinated with the calendar than the agricultural year.

#### The date of the institution of proedroi

The epistates of the prytaneis is last attested in 403/2<sup>1</sup> and the epistates of the proedroi is first recorded in 379/8.<sup>2</sup> So much for the direct epigraphic evidence. Though Rhodes believed that the proedroi might not have been in existence as late as the 390s, MacDowell and Hansen proposed that they were instituted soon after 403/2.<sup>3</sup> But a little noted passage of Apollodorus suggests a low date for the introduction of proedroi.

The new and lower terminus for the creation of proedroi must be extracted from the forbidding realm of Athenian naturalization procedure. Apollodorus tells us that the law required a quorum of 6,000 to confirm an award of citizenship made in the previous ekklesia,<sup>4</sup> and describes something of the procedure followed at assemblies which confirmed a naturalization decree: 'And the law orders the prytaneis to set out the ballot boxes and to give the ballots to the people as they approach' (τοὺς δὲ πρυτάνεις κελεύει τιθέναι τοὺς κἀδίσκους ὁ νόμος καὶ τὴν ψήφον διδόναι προσ-

<sup>1</sup> *JG* ii<sup>2</sup> 1.41-42.

<sup>2</sup> *CSCA* v (1972) 164-69.

<sup>3</sup> P.J. Rhodes, *A commentary on the Aristotelian Athenian Politeia* (Oxford 1981) 534; D.M. MacDowell, 'Law-making at Athens in the fourth century BC', *JHS* xciv (1975) 68; M.. Hansen, *The Athenian Assembly in the age of Demosthenes* (Oxford 1987) 37.

<sup>4</sup> [Dem.] lix 89.