

Ancient City of Lato

Lato was an ancient city of Crete, the ruins of which are located approximately 3 km from the small town of Kritsa. The Dorian city-state was built in a defensible position overlooking Mirabello Bay between two peaks, both of which became acropolises to the city. Although the city probably predates the arrival of the Dorians, the ruins date mainly from the Dorian period (fifth and fourth centuries BC). The city was destroyed ca. 200 BCE, but its port (Lato Etera or Lato pros Kamara), located near Agios Nikolaos was in use during Roman rule. This has led to the confusion, repeated by Stephanus of Byzantium quoting Xenion, a Cretan historian, that Kamara and Lato were one and the same. Modern scholarship distinguishes the two.

There is some suggestion that the city was named after the goddess Leto (of which Lato is the usual Doric form) and may be mentioned in Linear B tablets as RA-TO. Lato also minted coins in antiquity,^[3] bearing the likeness of the goddess Eileithyia who appears to have been the one particularly worshipped at Lato.

Nearchus, admiral of Alexander the Great, was born at Lato.