

BOUDORON, AN ATHENIAN FORT ON SALAMIS

(PLATE 72)

IN the autumn of 429 B.C., after suffering two defeats at the hands of Phormion, the Peloponnesian fleet retired to Lechaion. Before dispersing the crews for the winter, however, the commanders resolved to make a surprise attack upon Piraeus, then unguarded. Eight thousand men were marched overland to Nisaia, where forty triremes awaited them in drydocks. The men arrived by night and immediately embarked. But awed by Athenian naval prestige, thwarted by contrary winds, and disheartened by unseaworthy vessels, they abandoned the attempt on Piraeus. Instead they sailed to the promontory of Salamis which looks towards Megara. Here was an Athenian fort, Boudoron, where three ships were stationed in order to blockade the Megarian harbors. The Peloponnesians overpowered the fort and plundered the whole island. News of the attack was transmitted by beacon to Piraeus, and from there to Athens. At dawn, the Athenians, having recovered from their initial panic, launched a relief expedition. The Peloponnesians retreated to Nisaia before their coming, and withdrew to Corinth; the Athenian fleet sailed home.

Such is the account given by Thucydides.¹ It is our sole primary narrative of the affair of Boudoron.² The date of the building of the fort is unknown. But it is generally agreed (see, e. g., F. M. Cornford, *Thucydides Mythistoricus*, pp. 29-30) that this blockade was part of the concerted Athenian plan to reduce Megara to submission, a plan which began with the Megarian decrees and continued with the invasion and wasting of the Megarid annually from 431 to 424 (Thucydides, II, 31, IV, 66).³ This would imply that the fort was erected at least as early as the beginning

NOTE: Eugene Vanderpool suggested numerous improvements in both the form and the content of this paper. The author also profited from discussions with C. N. Edmonson.

¹ Thucydides, II, 93-94.

² The same event is narrated by Diodoros, XII, 49, 2-5, whose information is drawn through Ephoros from Thucydides (E. Schwartz, *R.E.*, s.v. Ephoros, col. 6, lines 50-51; F. Jacoby, *Frag. Gr. Hist.*, II, C, 1926, p. 95). Thucydides again mentions Boudoron in III, 51, 2. Other passing references to Boudoron are Ephoros, *Frag.* 198 Jacoby (in Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Βούδορον); Strabo, X, p. 446; Eustathius, *Commentarii*, Ed. Rom., p. 280, line 31, *ad Il.* II, 538; *Scholia in Thucydidem*, *ad Il.* 93, 4, III, 51, 1. All these probably depend on Thucydides, directly or indirectly. It follows that the multiplicity of forms of the name, Βούδορον, Βούδορον, Βούδαρον, Βουδόριον, arises from corruptions.

³ The effect of this blockade is disputed. G. Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte*, III, 2, 1904, p. 923, says "Infolge davon trat in Megara Verarmung und Hungersnot ein." G. B. Grundy, *Thucydides and the History of his Age*, I, 1911, p. 340, says "Doubtless blockade-running was easy in an age in which it was difficult to keep ships at sea for any prolonged period." It seems likely that Boudoron

of the war; perhaps it was one of the *φρούρια* mentioned by Perikles in his appraisal of Athenian resources (Thucydides, II, 13, 6). Or perhaps it was one of the *φυλακαί* established by the Athenians after the first Peloponnesian invasion of Attica (Thucydides, II, 24, 1).

How long the fort continued in use is not known. Diodoros' assertion that the garrison was strengthened after the Peloponnesian attack (XII, 49, 5) is an assumption, either his own or that of Ephoros. Adcock's statement that Boudoron was destroyed by the Peloponnesians in 429 (*C.A.H.*, V, 1927, p. 210) is perhaps not justified by the sources. At any rate the Athenians held Minoa from 427 and Nisaia from 424 (Thucydides, IV, 69, 4). These would be (as Thucydides makes Nikias suggest, III, 51, 2) better posts than Boudoron for the surveillance of Megara. Perhaps the fort was abandoned at this time.⁴

On the basis of the text of Thucydides topographers have discussed the site of Boudoron. Sir William Gell placed the fort on "a rocky point, opposite Aegina," where he observed some traces of ancient habitation.⁵ Others, unsupported by ruins, prefer to locate it on the promontory of Kara, which terminates in Cape Petritis, south of the Bay of Salamis.⁶ Yet others, without pointing to specific remains, designate the peninsula between the Bays of Tourkolimano and Salamis, which runs out to Cape Dabias (*Ντάμπιας*) (Fig. 1).⁷

But the favored candidate for the site of the fort has long been the northwestern promontory of Salamis, the peninsula upon which the convent of Panayia Phanero-

also served the function of a lookout, to observe and to signal Athens if a fleet should begin to assemble in Megarian waters.

⁴ An inscription of about 250 B.C., which mentions the "building of the walls which had collapsed in the island" (*I.G.*, II², 1225, lines 11-12), surely refers only to formal walls (perhaps of the capital—so taken by C. Horner, *Quaestiones Salaminiæ*, Diss. Bern, 1901, p. 3), not to rubble walls.

⁵ *The Itinerary of Greece*, 2nd ed., 1827, p. 303; according to S. H. Weber, *Voyages and Travels in the Near East made during the XIX. Century*, 1952, p. 33, this edition was a reprint of the first, 1819. The remains seen by Gell were subsequently identified as "Old Salamis" (Strabo, IX, p. 393); see W. M. Leake, *The Demi of Attica*, 2nd ed., 1841, p. 169; Edward Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece*, 1819, I, p. 576; and cf. A. Milchhoefer, *Text to Curtius and Kaupert's Karten von Attika*, vii-viii, 1895, p. 36.

⁶ F. Bölte and G. Weicker, *Ath. Mitt.*, XXIX, 1904, pp. 79-80; H. Kiepert, *Formae orbis antiqui*, 1906, map XIV, and p. 5 of accompanying text; Bernard W. Henderson, *The Great War between Athens and Sparta*, 1927, map on page 135.

⁷ Rhigas Pherraios, *Χάρτα τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐν ἣ περιέχονται αἱ νῆσοι αὐτῆς καὶ μέρος τῶν εἰς τὴν Εὐρώπην καὶ Μικρὰν Ἀσίαν πολυαριθμῶν ἀποικίων αὐτῆς* Vienna, 1797, inset map of Salamis; Leake, *Demi*², pp. 173-174; A. D. Godley, *Herodotus* (Loeb Classical Library), 1924, IV, map at end. A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, II, 1956, p. 240, on II, 94, 3, wrongly states that Bölte and Weicker place Boudoron here. There are on the highest summit of Restis (260.2 m.), at the foot of a modern surveyor's rubble beacon, the foundations (*ca.* 0.50 m. high) of a round tower, hitherto unnoticed, *ca.* 5 m. in diameter; from this vantage point there is a superb view of the whole Megarian and western Attic coasts.

meni stands. The promontory is called today (as in Bursian's time⁸) Perama, from the ferry which links it to the Megarid. The backbone of the peninsula is a ridge, locally called Rakhi Steno, running east and west; it rises from the sea at the west in a series of progressively higher rounded hills, culminating in a summit southeast of the

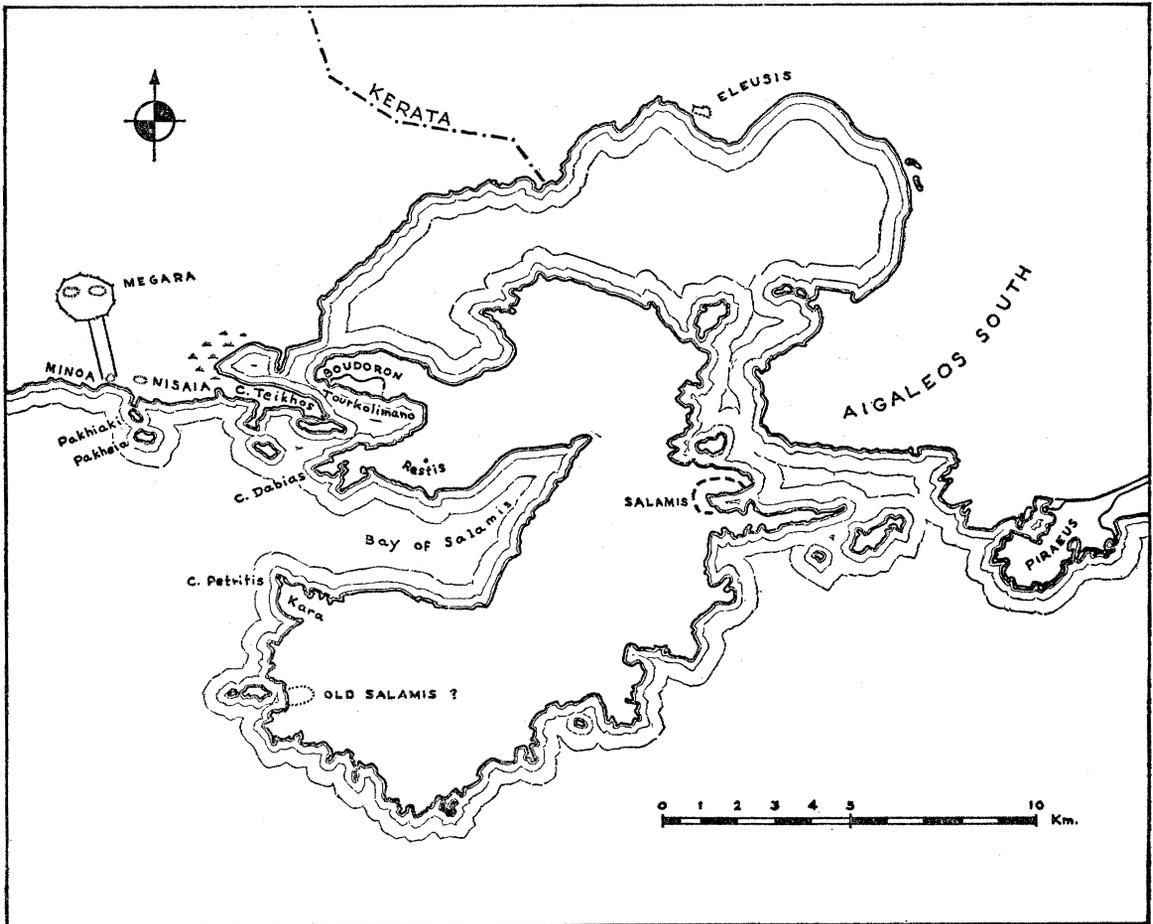


FIG. 1. The Island of Salamis

convent at a height of 146.1 meters, east of which the ridge gradually subsides. The arable land to the north is called Phaneromeni, that to the south Steno.

Three hundred and fifty paces south of the ferry, at the western end of this ridge, Velsen had come upon the remains, four feet high, of a round tower ten paces in diameter, constructed of polygonal worked stones.⁹ This he identified as Boudoron.

⁸ Conrad Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland*, 1862, I, p. 365.

⁹ *Arch. Anz. in Archäologische Zeitung*, XIII, 1855, pp. 115 f.; compare his letter quoted by Wilhelm Vischer, *Erinnerungen und Eindrücke aus Griechenland*, 2nd ed., 1875, p. 221. J. Spratt's

In addition, Velsen had found remains nearer the ferry, including a square tower; Bursian combined these and spoke of "considerable remnants of an ancient fortification, walls with round and square towers."¹⁰

Further east, on the summit of the hill south of the convent, on Sept. 29, 1805, Dodwell discovered "traces and foundations of walls and towers of considerable strength and thickness, consisting of a mixture of small stones and large unhewn blocks."¹¹ In these he saw Boudoron. Here also Sir William Gell found "the remains of a very ancient fortress, or city";¹² these remains, though not claimed by Gell himself for Boudoron, were recognized as such by Cramer.¹³

Most subsequent scholars have treated Velsen's and Dodwell's forts as a single entity and identified it as Boudoron. Milchhoefer¹⁴ and Oberhummer¹⁵ place this united fort by the ferry; Frazer¹⁶ and Béquignon¹⁷ put it south of the convent.

Today nothing remains of Velsen's tower beyond its foundations at the top of the hill—the traces of a circle of stones, about eight meters in diameter. Some ten meters west-southwest are similar foundations of a second tower, slightly smaller; Velsen's silence concerning it indicates that it was not standing in 1855. The foundations of both towers stand no higher than 0.10 m. anywhere; in many places they barely break the surface of the ground. These two towers are almost certainly not connected with Boudoron. As Bölte and Weicker pointed out (*Ath. Mitt.*, XXIX, 1904, p. 80), they command no view whatever of the harbor of Megara. Furthermore, they are too small to serve as the land headquarters of 600 men;¹⁸ they provide no view to Piraeus as Boudoron must have done.¹⁹ They probably antedate Boudoron by more than a century.²⁰

plan (*Journal of the Geographical Society*, VIII, 2, 1838, pp. 205 ff.; reproduced by Thomas Arnold (1874) with his note on Thucydides III, 51, and less clearly by E. H. Bunbury, *s.v.* Megara in *Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, 1873, II, p. 315) shows "Ant. Ruins" of two rectilinear buildings on the site of Velsen's tower. H. G. Lolling, *Ath. Mitt.*, V, 1880, opp. p. 10 (map reproduced by J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece*, 1898, II, p. 540, on Pausanias I, 44) adapted Spratt's plan and affixed the name "Budoron" to "Ant. Ruins."

¹⁰ *Geographie*, I, p. 365.

¹¹ *Tour*, I, pp. 579 f.; almost *verbatim* in German, A. Prokesch von Osten, *Denkwürdigkeiten und Erinnerungen aus dem Orient*, 1836, II, p. 359.

¹² *Itinerary*, p. 304; cf. also *ibid.*, p. 15.

¹³ J. A. Cramer, *A Geographical and Historical Description of Ancient Greece*, 1828, II, p. 367.

¹⁴ Text to *Karten*, vii-viii, 1895, p. 35.

¹⁵ *R. E.*, *s.v.* Budoron, col. 992.

¹⁶ *Pausanias*, 1898, II, pp. 479 f., on Pausanias, I, 35.

¹⁷ *Les Guides Bleus, Grèce*, 1935, p. 148.

¹⁸ The crew of a trireme was regularly 200 both in the 5th century (Herodotos, VIII, 17, VII, 184; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, I, 5, 5-7) and in the 4th century (*I.G.*, II², 1615, b, lines 38-45, 56-63; c, lines 108-115; 1616, lines 10-17, 27-34, 59-66; 1618, a, lines 52-59).

¹⁹ Eleusis, however, is visible from this point.

²⁰ The sketch of Tower 1 given by Velsen shows that the masonry was what R. L. Scranton

About 200 meters east of this first hill, halfway up the slope towards the second summit of the ridge, is a large field which was planted with peas in the spring of 1958. In the northwest part of this field is the corner of a walled enclosure. The remains

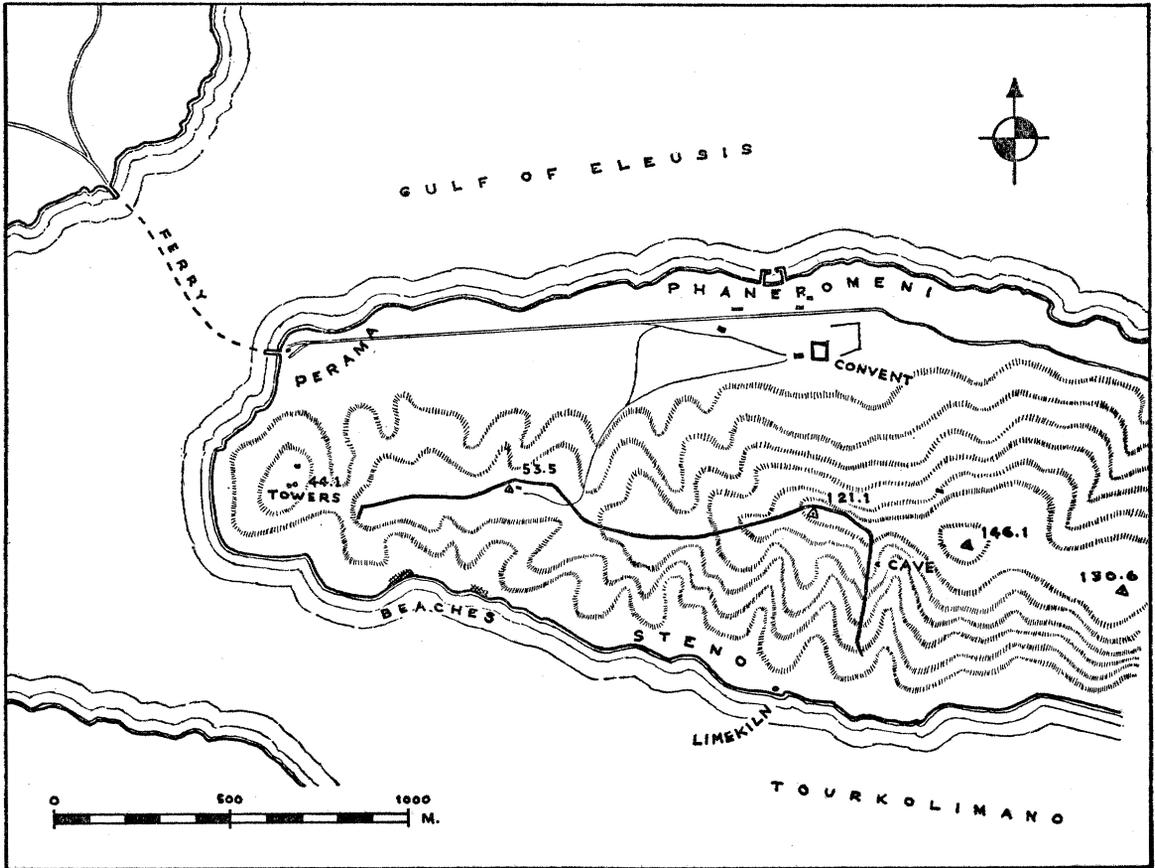


FIG. 2. Perama Peninsula of Salamis

of the wall can be traced southward for about 30 meters before they lose themselves on the steeper bare rocky slopes of the hill south and west of the field. From this same

calls Lesbian "with a tendency towards horizontal courses" (*Greek Walls*, 1941, p. 35). It is rather similar to the "Peisistratische Turmsockel" at Eleusis (illustrated by W. Wrede, *Attische Mauern*, 1933, pl. 13) which is dated in the 6th century. An early date for Tower 1 is proposed by Bölte and Weicker (*Ath. Mitt.*, XXIX, 1904, p. 80): "Jener Turm wird in dem Kämpfen des VII. und VI. Jahrhunderts erbaut sein." If so, it is barely possible that these towers date from Solon's conquest of Salamis; Leake tentatively suggested (*Demi*², p. 174, note 2) that Boudoron was the center at which Solon anchored on this occasion (this involves an emendation of the text of Plutarch, *Solon*, 9, 2, reading *Nioavav* instead of *Eῦβοiav*, a conjecture in which Leake anticipated Sintenis, who is usually given credit for the emendation). Another possibility is that the towers are simply farm towers; see J. H. Young, *Hesperia*, XXV, 1956, pp. 122-146.

corner the wall runs east for some 1500 meters; its whole east-west line is regularly about 20 meters north of the crest of the ridge, curving here and there as the ridge curves. At its highest point the wall sweeps around the top of the hill and runs south down the crest of a spur towards Tourkolimano,²¹ passing just 15 meters west of a small cave called Spilaio Stenou. Traces of it fail some 120 meters north of the bay, where the cultivated land begins. Undeniably both end walls originally began at the sea, even though their lower reaches have been totally effaced (Fig. 2; Pl. 72, a, b).

The best preserved section is on the slopes of the hill at the northeast corner of the circuit. This must have been the part seen by Dodwell in 1805. Here the outer face is in many cases undisturbed; it stands, roughly perpendicular, as high as 1.20 m. (Pl. 72, c, d). The inner face is nowhere clear; rather, the wall appears built up, ramp-like, from the rear to form an inclined terrace about 2 meters broad.

In its lower stretches the wall is less well preserved; yet it is still sharply enough defined to serve for 550 meters as the boundary between cultivated pea-fields to the south and uncultivated pine-forests to the north. There is no trace of the towers mentioned by Dodwell, though there are in several places bare outcroppings of jagged rock beside the line of the wall, which to the casual observer might resemble a crumbled tower. The material of the wall is the hard gray limestone of which the ridge is composed.

The wall is constructed of moderate sized unworked stones laid without mortar, a style which has been characterized as “polygonaux si l'on veut, mais négligés.”²² This type of construction is of necessity the same in any age, and ancient walls built in this manner bear a marked resemblance to modern enclosure walls (*mandres*).²³ Nevertheless there is no need to question the antiquity of our wall, and indeed it is known from literary sources that such walls were constructed in antiquity; for example, the Athenians on Koryphasion

set their hands to this task and went to work; they had no iron tools for working stone, but picked up stones and put them together just as they happened to fit. And if mud were needed anywhere, having no hods, they carried it on their backs, which they bent so as to form a resting place for it, clasping their hands behind them that it might not fall off.²⁴

Moreover, a large number of existing walls of this type are accepted as ancient,²⁵

²¹ This is the current popular name for the bay which appears in the *Karten von Attika* as “Trupika Bucht” and in the British Staff Map (1943) as “Orm. Ay. Yeoryiou” (Fig. 1).

²² G. Roux, *B.C.H.*, LXXVIII, 1954, p. 45.

²³ G. B. Grundy, *J.H.S.*, XVIII, 1898, pp. 234-235; Scranton, *Greek Walls*, p. 16; Roux, *B.C.H.*, LXXVIII, 1954, p. 45.

²⁴ Thucydides, IV, 4, 2; the translation is composite, depending chiefly on B. Jowett and C. F. Smith. Thucydides notes other walls of unworked stone: an old fort on Sphakteria, IV, 31, 2; the Athenian wall at Syracuse, VI, 66, 2.

²⁵ Scranton, *Greek Walls*, pp. 184-185, gives a list of “Dry Rubble Walls,” but in it he includes “walls of blocks which do seem to have been worked to some extent, but which are poorly set,

for example, a fort between Chalkis and Eretria,²⁶ the wall around the tower at Askra,²⁷ Kastro Korynou three kilometers south of Kavasala,²⁸ a fort on Parnes above Menidi identified by some as Leipsydriou,²⁹ a wall around the signal tower behind the "Dema" wall,³⁰ μάνδρα τῆς γραΐας at Marathon,³¹ the acropolis above Kato Souli ("Trikokrythos"),³² the wall across Marathonian Kynosoura.³³ It is clear that a rural fortification would naturally be constructed of the field stones conveniently at hand.

The site on Salamis fulfills all the conditions necessary to Boudoron. Most of the coast enclosed by the wall is forbidding and unusable for triremes, either being rocky or having a high bank just north of the shore. But there are two stretches, 200 meters apart, which combine a sandy beach with a gradual slope inland; both are at the western end of the enclosure. Thus there is a good stretch of beach on which to draw up the three triremes of the post.

From the summit (the highest point inside the wall), the view towards Megara is panoramic. The whole peninsula of Cape Teikhos and the islands of Makroniso (Troupika), Revitousa, Pakheia, and Pakhiaki are spread before one. The harbor itself is not visible; but it would be impossible for any vessel to enter or leave the harbor without being observed from here.

From the same summit one has a clear view of the ancient acropolis of Eleusis. Eleusis was probably always one of the military capitals of Attica.³⁴ Thucydides implies (II, 94, 1), however, that in 429 the fire signal was flashed *directly* to Piraeus; and Piraeus is not in the direct line of sight from within the fort. About 250 meters east of the corner of the wall is the highest point of the ridge; from this summit one looks east-southeast through the valley of northern Salamis towards Piraeus, which is visible just across Salamis strait. This summit is bleak and rocky with some bushes and a few trees; there are loose unworked stones scattered over it, but no evidence of a wall or signal tower. Still, a beacon erected here would clearly be visible from Piraeus.

with no good joints" (p. 16). For this reason many of his walls are too formal in appearance for comparison with ours.

²⁶ G. A. Papavasileiou, 'Εφ. 'Αρχ., 1903, pp. 131-134.

²⁷ H. G. Lolling, *Ath. Mitt.*, I, 1876, p. 81; Roux, *B.C.H.*, LXXVIII, 1954, pp. 45 ff.

²⁸ I. Sarris, 'Αρχ. 'Εφ., 1927/8, pp. 112-119.

²⁹ Milchhoefer, text to *Karten von Attika*, iii-vi, 1889, p. 49; vii-viii, 1895, p. 7.

³⁰ S. Dow, *Hesperia*, XI, 1942, p. 206; J. E. Jones, L. H. Sackett, C. W. J. Eliot, *B.S.A.*, LII, 1957, p. 173.

³¹ Lolling, *Ath. Mitt.*, I, 1876, p. 81.

³² *Ibid.*; Milchhoefer, text to *Karten*, iii-vi, 1889, p. 49.

³³ G. Sotiriadis, *Πρακτικά*, 1935, p. 153, fig. 20.

³⁴ Recognized as such in the fourth century, Demosthenes, *De Corona*, 38; but it had strong walls even from Peisistratid times.

These considerations account for the size of the fort; for, if the two towers at the west are too small, this wall is, if anything, too large. It was necessary to enclose both the trireme base at the west and the observation post 1000 meters east, as well as to control the ridge above the beach. Why the wall was not extended to enclose the summit which looks to Piraeus is not evident; perhaps it was thought that in the event of an attack upon the fort it would still be possible to light the beacon on the summit.

Boudoron was roughly one-half hour's rowing time for a trireme from the harbor of Megara.³⁵ Presumably there was always at least one trireme on patrol just off Megara.³⁶ It is a tribute to the effectiveness of the trireme and to the reputation of Athenian thalassocracy that three ships were able to intimidate the Megarians; but two triremes stationed on the island of Atalante were deemed adequate to suppress the piracy of the Opuntian Locrians (Thucydides, II, 32, III, 89, 3).

The existence of remains of more than one period has led to confusion in the identification of Boudoron. A careful study of Thucydides, however, leaves no doubt that the rubble fortification described above must, in fact, be Boudoron. It is within striking distance of Megara, encloses the only convenient beaches, secures the ridge itself, includes an excellent vantage point for observing the waters off Megara, and gives ready access to the summit from which signals could be sent directly to Piraeus.³⁷

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³⁵ The maximum speed of a trireme was seven or eight knots, as proved mathematically by W. L. Rodgers, *Greek and Roman Naval Warfare*, 1937, pp. 9, 45, and accepted by W. W. Tarn, *Cl. Rev.*, LII, 1938, p. 76 (palinode of his earlier assertion that such calculations were impossible, *Cl. Rev.*, XXIII, 1910, p. 184, note 1), and by Gomme, *Commentary on Thucydides*, I, 1945, p. 20; cf. Livy, XLV, 41.

From the east end of Pakheia Island, in front of Megara harbor, to the limekiln at the east end of Boudoron is *ca.* 6300 m.; from Pakheia to the westernmost good beach of Boudoron is *ca.* 6500 m. Allowing *exempli gratia* a maximum speed of 7 knots (12,973 meters per hour), the rowing time is 29.1 to 30.1 minutes.

³⁶ Cf. Thucydides, IV, 23, 2; in the Athenian blockade of Sphacteria, two triremes circled the island in opposite directions.

³⁷ It was not until this article was in the hands of the editor that my attention was directed to Franz Georg Maier, *Griechische Mauerbauinschriften*, I, Heidelberg, 1959. On pages 108-110 a third candidate for Boudoron is described, with photographs and a plan. Near the shore at the ferry Maier has found traces of a wall which he interprets as enclosing an area at least 30 meters square; he preëmpts Velsen's tower as observation post. But even so the location is not convenient either for spying on Megara or for communicating with Athens. In any event Maier's building cannot be the wall which Dodwell saw above the monastery.



a. Looking west; in right background, chapel of St. George (Nisaia)



b. Looking west towards the Megarian plain



c. Outer face of north wall near east corner



d. Outer face of north wall

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