# AN ANCIENT FORT ON MOUNT ONEION

(PLATES 23–27)

IN addition to the mighty citadel of Acrocorinth and the Long Walls linking the city to its western port of Lechaion, ancient Corinth possessed another effective barrier to movement through the Isthmos in the long finger of Mount Oneion. Rising to a maximum height of 584 m. above sea-level, the rocky spine of this mountain extends for about seven kilometers on an east-west line which forms the southern boundary of the Corinthian Isthmos.[1] At its western end it is separated from Acrocorinth by a narrow but level pass which carries the Leukon river, the Peloponnesian railway, and the modern highway to Argos. At its eastern extremity Oneion drops steeply down to the sea and ends in a stubby promontory, the ancient Chersonesos, which marks the northern limit of the bay of Galataki and has at its base the Baths of Helen.[2] The ancient port of Kenchreai on the Saronic Gulf lies a little more than a kilometer to the north.

At the base of Chersonesos, below the steeply rising rocks of Mount Oneion, passed an important ancient road leading south from the Isthmos into the plain of Galataki, ancient Solygeia, and then to the hinterland of southeastern Corinthia, where the modern villages of Vlasseïka, Katakali, and Sophiko are located. In wartime the road became a strategic artery; by following it around Mount Oneion and then turning westward past Solygeia, an invading army could easily make its way into the southern Corinthia, and thence to Argos, unhindered by either the defenses at the western end of Oneion or those of Acrocorinth and the Long Walls to Lechaion. An alternate route through the eastern end of the mountain is more direct, although steeper and unsuitable for wheeled vehicles. It lies in the hollow between the eastern peak of Stanotopi and Hill 427 m.; see Figure 1.

Since control of these two roads was essential to the defense of the southern Corinthia and of the entire Peloponnesos, it is not surprising to find extensive remains of classical fortifications at the eastern end of Mount Oneion. That these remains

[1] With the exception of Strabo, VIII, 6, 21 and IX, 1, 8, the ancient sources are unanimous in identifying this mountain as Oneion or Oneia. For the testimonia and useful discussions see W. Wachsmuth, *Hellenische Altertumskunde,* I, Halle, 1846, pp. 766-768; E. Meyer, *R.E., s.v.* Oneion, nos. 1 and 2. Strabo's application of the name *Ὄνεια ὄρη* to the whole massif which stretches from Nisaia to the Halkyonic Gulf and from the Skironian Cliffs to Boiotia and Kithairon has been interpreted as a blunder by most modern scholars, but Meyer has sought to justify Strabo's nomenclature by citing a proverb, *ῥᾷον ἢ τὸ Ὄνειον ὑπερέβησαν οἱ Βοιωτοί,* Suda Lexicon, *s.v. ῥᾷον,* which he interprets as referring to a mountain on the borders of Boiotia. *Ὄρειον* is a variant reading.

[2] For the identification of this promontory and for the topography of the plain of Galataki in general see R. S. Stroud, "Thucydides and the Battle of Solygeia," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity,* IV, 1971 (forthcoming).

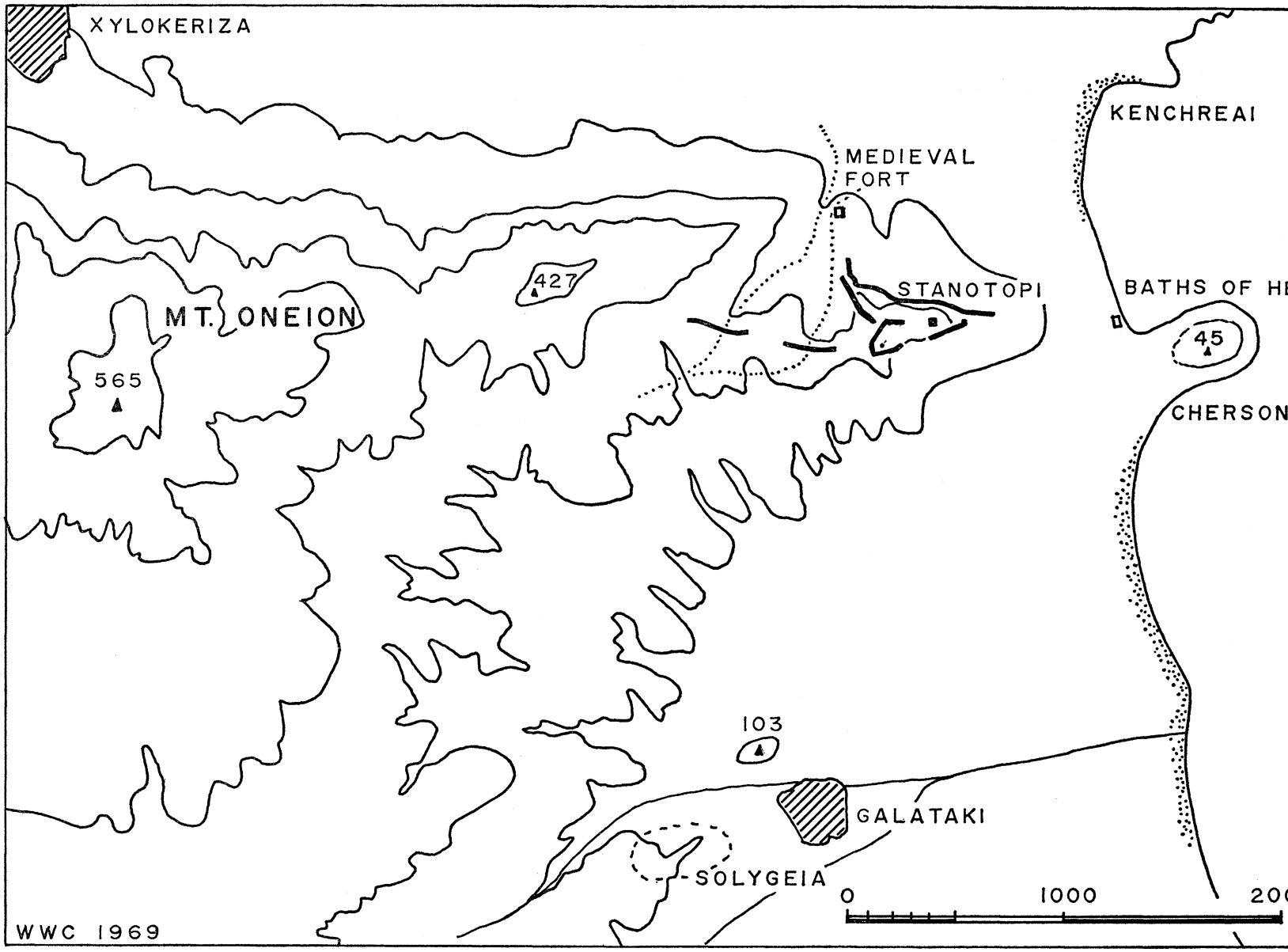


FIG. 1. Sketch Plan of Mt. Oneion and Vicinity. (1:25,000)

have not received the attention they deserve from students of ancient topography and military history is reason enough for the descriptions which follow and for the discussion of some of the campaigns in which the fort may have figured. A description of the fort, however, is even more desirable at this time because of greatly increased activity during recent years in what was previously a fairly remote corner of the Corinthia. The topography of the area is rapidly being altered by quarry operations, an expanding summer resort, the new highway to Epidauros, and a maze of roads cut into the southern face of the mountain by the Greek army. In only one small place has this activity actually encroached on the ancient fortifications but, in view of the rapid expansion in the last few years, the situation could change overnight.

The ancient remains are on the eastern summit of Oneion (now called Stanotopi) and on the hills immediately to the west. They consist of a ruined watchtower on the summit of Stanotopi; to the west of it a walled enclosure with an ancient cistern; below and to the north a long stretch of fortification wall of rubble construction; and farther west, on the ridge between Stanotopi and Hill 427 m., considerable remains of two other rubble walls.

## THE TOWER

(Figure 2; Plate 23, a-d)

This structure is very poorly preserved and is half covered by earth, but enough survives to show that it was almost square in plan, 8.80 m. x 9.10 m. (Fig. 2). The walls are preserved to a maximum height of 1.20 m. on the west side; their outer face (Pl. 23, a, c) is constructed of large, squared blocks of gray limestone laid in roughly ashlar courses, irregularities in which are filled with smaller stones. The blocks are quarry-faced and bear no trace of drafting at the edges. The inner face of the walls (Pl. 23, b, d) is built of smaller, roughly squared blocks, also set in almost horizontal courses, but on the west wall the coursing steps up slightly from south to north (Pl. 23, b). Between the two faces there is a packing of earth and rubble. The total thickness of the walls is 1.50-1.60 m.

Blocks lie all around the tower and below it, but their number is insufficient to restore stone walls all the way to the roof. It seems likely, therefore, that what has survived is a stone socle for walls which were originally carried up to the roof in mud-brick, and perhaps wood, construction. This probably accounts for the thickness of the walls which seems excessive if masonry of squared blocks was planned for the superstructure.[3]

[3] Free-standing towers of rectangular plan often reach considerable heights even with stone walls only one block thick. Cf. the tower in the Vathychoria of the Megarid, which is preserved to its original height of *ca.* 10 m. with walls 0.45 m. thick, N. G. L. Hammond, *B.S.A.*, XLIX, 1954, p. 109, Tower C; and the Attic tower at Mazi, which stands *ca.* 16 m. high with walls only 0.70 m. thick, H. Mussche, *Monumenta Graeca et Romana*, vol. II, fasc. 2, Leiden, 1963, p. 37, pl. 113. b.

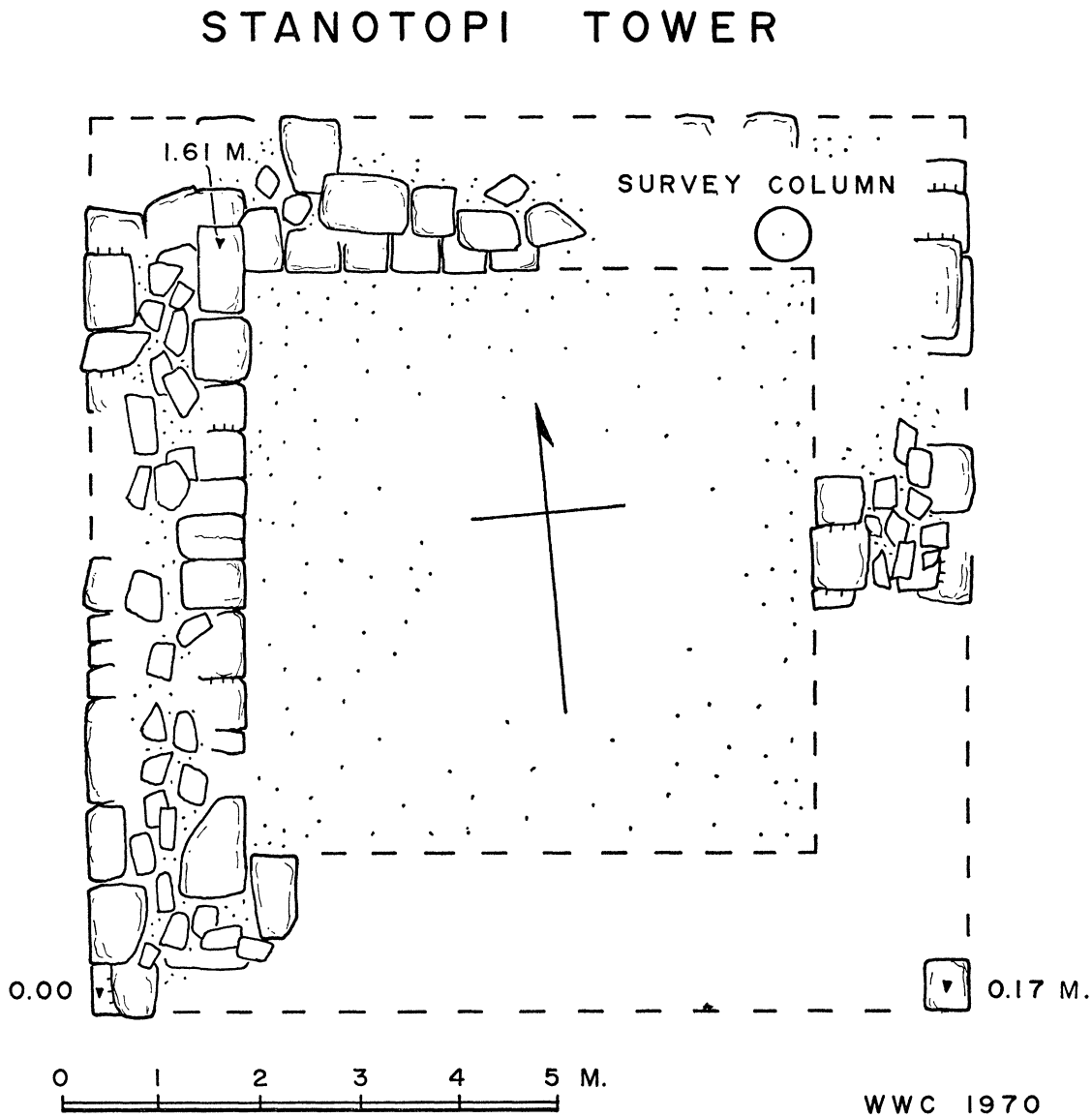


FIG. 2. Tower on Stanotopi.

The plentiful terracotta roof tiles lying all about the tower are of two types: (1) smoothly polished, yellow Corinthian pan- and cover-tiles and (2) thinner Laconian tiles with dull black or reddish glaze. I have not found on the surface any

For the unusual thickness of the walls of the Stanotopi tower in proportion to their length compare the observations made by J. H. Young on the basis of eighty towers, *Hesperia,* XXV, 1956, pp. 134-135, especially note 31. The strategic position of the Stanotopi tower and its close connection with the massive rubble wall and the walls closing off the pass to the west indicate that it is not to be interpreted as part of a country estate.

examples which preserve the full dimensions of either variety. Both types were used in classical buildings in Corinth and their presence at the tower probably indicates that during the classical period the original roof of the structure was replaced, or perhaps only repaired, at least once.

There is no certain evidence for the floor or the internal plan of the tower, since the interior walls disappear into the heavy layer of earth which fills the structure on the two sides (north and west) where they are exposed. Some recent digging has been done inside the tower, but even here the original floor level does not appear to have been reached. The depth of fill offers a good chance that excavation might expose the original floor and perhaps some debris accumulated over it.[4]

Projecting slightly above the earth inside the tower near the east wall, but tilted out of position, is a small block which bears a thick (0.025 m.) coat of stucco on its upper surface. Two other small blocks lying to the east and south of the tower are identical, and the three blocks together probably indicate the existence of a stuccoed surface somewhere inside the tower. The stucco is of a thickness and a composition frequently found in classical floor surfaces at Corinth, and these blocks may provide evidence for similar treatment of the ground floor of the tower. They may also indicate the presence of a stuccoed basin set into the floor as in the tower at Ligurio in the Argolid.[5] It is unlikely that the interior walls were stuccoed; their blocks show no trace of ever having been coated and have rough, quarry-faced surfaces which are both unsuitable for the application of stucco and unlike the smoother surface on the three blocks just described.

No trace of an entrance has survived, but it clearly did not pierce the western or northern wall. There is a wide gap in the mound of earth covering the east wall at its southern end, and the entire south wall is hidden. Only excavation could possibly help determine the position of the doorway but the south wall appears to be the likeliest candidate, since an opening on this side would provide the maximum amount of light for the ground floor while being at the same time least exposed to the wind that whips down the Saronic Gulf.

Even from the ruined walls of the tower the view is magnificent; it must have been more impressive from the top where the surrounding pine trees would not have interfered. Acrocorinth is not visible but it can be seen from Hill 427 m. with which the tower could easily communicate by signals. The full sweep of the Isthmos, Loutraki, Perachora, Geraneia, Krommyon, the Skironian cliffs, and the Saronic Gulf as far as Aegina and Salamis can be scanned (Pl. 24, a). In reasonably clear weather

[4] Extra protection for the floor and for possible stratigraphy was provided unintentionally by the engineers of the Army Geographic Service who, when they erected their elevation column for Stanotopi on the north wall of the tower, mixed the cement for it inside the ancient structure thereby sealing off some of the fill below.

[5] See L. E. Lord, *Hesperia*, VII, 1938, pp. 520-527. I owe this suggestion to C. K. Williams.

it would have been almost impossible for an army to approach the Isthmos from the north or for a fleet to move into the western end of the Saronic Gulf without their movements being detected from the tower. To the south there is a commanding view of the plain of Solygeia, the main roads leading southward into the pass toward Sophiko, and in a southwesterly direction toward Athikia and the Argolid.

For dating the tower the style of masonry is of little help, since the walls are so poorly preserved. The jointing on the exterior wall near the northwest corner, as shown on Plate 23, c, is similar to that on the east city-wall of Corinth east of the southeast gate, but the date of the latter is uncertain.[6] A better indication of the period when the tower was in use is provided by the pottery found in and around it. Some of the more distinctive sherds will be described and illustrated.

**1.** (Pl. 24, b, lower left.) Fragment from the bottom of a skyphos of the so-called "Laphaes" type.[7]

Diam. of ring foot, 0.043 m. Dull black glaze inside and outside. Reserved band *ca.* 0.005 m. high immediately above foot. Reserved bottom with two concentric black rings. Hard, brown clay, possible Argive.

Date: mid-fourth century B.C.

**2.** (Pl. 24, b, upper left.) Fragment from the wall of an echinos bowl with inturned rim preserved.

Lustrous black glaze inside and outside. Traces of rouletting on interior. Original diam., *ca.* 0.13 m. Brown clay.

Date: *ca.* mid-fourth century B.C.

**3.** (Pl. 24, b, lower right.) Fragment from the mouth of a ring-handled guttus.

Diam., *ca.* 0.043 m. Lustrous black glaze inside and outside. Brown clay.

Date: late fourth or early third century B.C.

**4.** (Pl. 24, b, upper right.) Fragment from the wall of an echinos bowl with inturned rim preserved.

Dull black glaze inside and on upper half of outside. Below the glaze on the outside is a thinly incised ring. Original diam., 0.12 m. Orange clay.

Date: Probably third century B.C.

**5.** (Pl. 24, b, lower row, center.) Rim fragment of a black-glazed kantharos. Max. pres. dim., 0.035 m.

Black glaze inside and decorated on outside with incised tendrils and applied white paint.

Date: late fourth century or early third century B.C.

**6.** (Pl. 24, c) Fragment from the neck and rim of a large Corinthian amphora preserving part of one handle.

Buff clay. Probably from a Corinthian B type amphora; see *Hesperia,* XXXVIII, 1969, p. 10, no. 3. Original diam., *ca.* 0.13 m.

Date: late fourth to early third century B.C.

**7.** (Pl. 24, d) C-62-936. Stamped amphora handle of Corinthian B type.

Yellow clay. Max. pres. dim., 0.155 m. L. of stamp, 0.016 m. Deep, oval-shaped stamp with ⌶ or H within. Cf. *Hesperia,* XXII, 1953, pp. 108-109, no. 166; *ibid.,* Supplement X, 1956, p. 167, F.

Date: late fourth to early third century B.C.

**8.** Small fragment from the broad, flat rim of a large alabastron.

Smoothly polished alabaster. Original diam. of rim, 0.08 m. Not illustrated.

Date: fifth century B.C.?

[6] See the illustration in R. Carpenter, A. Bon, *Corinth,* III, ii, Cambridge, Mass., 1936, p. 53, fig. 43.

[7] For this term see C. W. Blegen, H. Palmer, R. S. Young, *Corinth,* XIII, Princeton, 1964, p. 128.

Although some earlier pieces have been found on the site of the tower, most of the pottery seems to belong to the period *ca.* 350-275 B.C. and later.

## THE UPPER ENCLOSURE

(Figure 3; Plate 25, a-b)

About 75 m. west of the tower there is a fairly level area measuring roughly 75 m. x 125 m. (Fig. 3). Much of it is now overgrown with low pine trees but there are a few open places. At the western edge of the area a great mass of fallen stones lies in a line that must mark the original course of a substantial wall. The upper part of the wall has tumbled down and covered the rest so completely that only a few blocks can be seen today in their original positions. The course of the wall, as I have been able to trace it, is shown in Figure 3, A1-A2, but its thickness and full extent cannot be accurately determined. In the area enclosed by this wall the ground level is considerably higher than outside; since there is much more earth fill in the enclosure than on the rockier ground below and outside it, the ruined rubble structure appears to have served as a retaining wall.

This was not its only function, however, as is made clear by the amount of stone that has fallen from the wall. If it were restored to its original position, the rubble wall would rise to a considerable height above its present level. The top of the wall as now preserved is on approximately the same level as the fill within it and this fill in turn is at about the ancient level, since in several places walls of small ancient buildings can be seen projecting above its surface. It appears, therefore, that the rubble wall originally rose too high above the ancient ground level to serve only as a retaining wall and it must also have functioned as a fortification for the structures in the enclosure.

Although the enclosed area was not large, activity here in ancient times was intense. The whole surface in the small clearings and amongst the pine trees is covered with a heavy accumulation of ancient roof tiles and pottery. Some thin walls project slightly above the surface, and there are many stones lying about which probably came from small buildings. Near the southwest corner of the enclosure is the open, circular mouth of an ancient cistern, which is bell-shaped in section. Its walls are coated with a fine, smooth stucco in which foot and hand holes have been sunk near the top. At its mouth the cistern is *ca.* 1.20 m. in diameter, and it lies open to a depth of *ca.* 2.50 m. (Pl. 25, b). It is possible that the cistern contains some original fill and that ancient pottery might still lie at the bottom.

Again the chronology indicated by the surface finds cannot be considered definitive but, as at the tower, the volume of pottery is large and some important sherds have been collected. With only a few possible exceptions, all the tiles are of classical date and closely resemble those from the tower. The pottery also falls within the

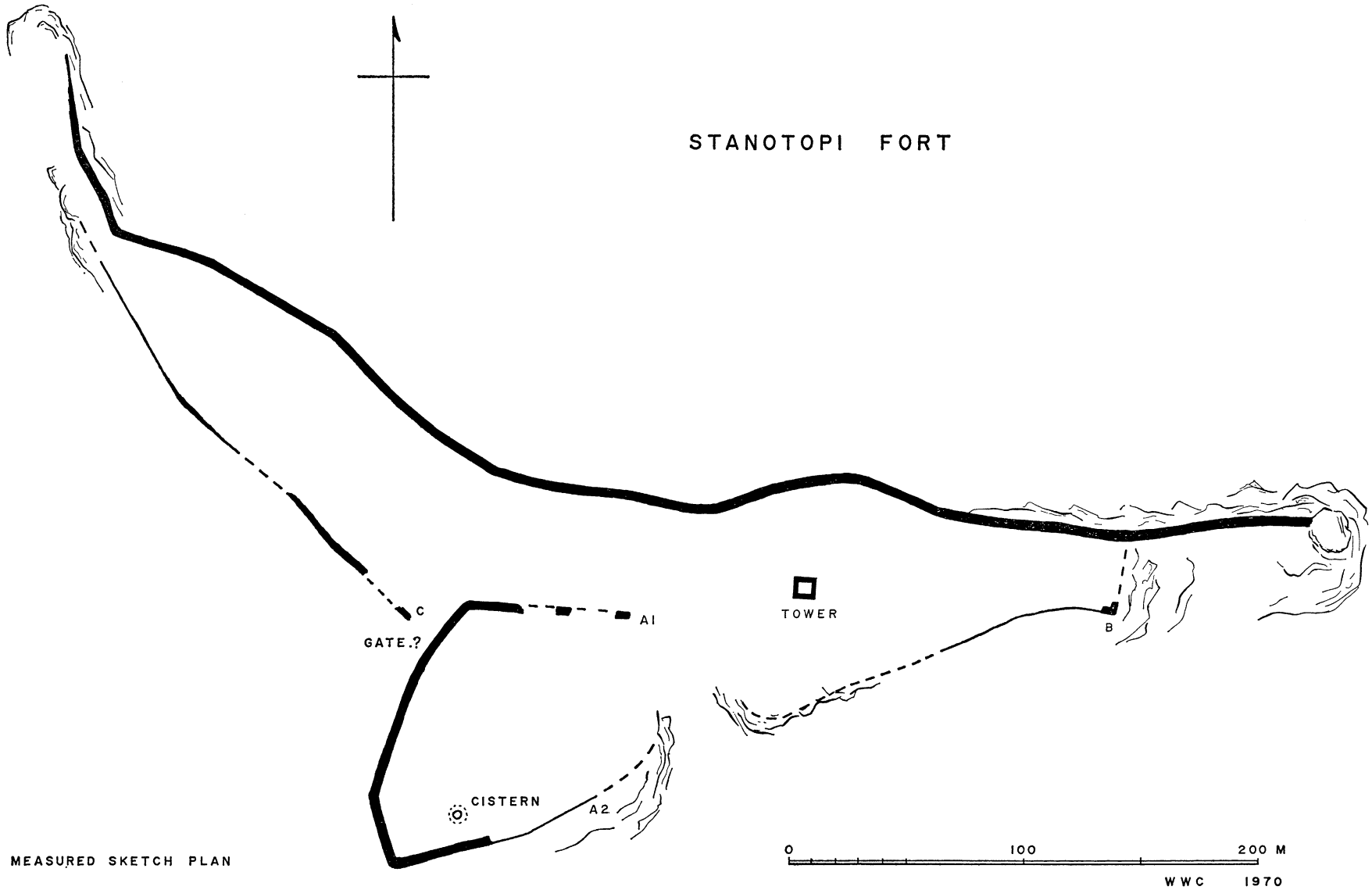


FIG. 3. Plan of Fortifications on Stanotopi.

same general period, although a few fifth-century sherds and a handful of Roman pieces attest some minor activity on Stanotopi during these two periods.

**9.** (Pl. 25, c, center left.) Wall fragment from large, black-glazed skyphos of the "Laphaes" type.

Narrow, out-turned rim preserved. Soft, buff clay, glazed inside and outside. Original diam. at rim, *ca.* 0.19 m.

Date: mid-fourth century B.C.

**10.** (Pl. 25, c, center right.) Base of a kantharos with lustrous black glaze inside and outside.

Reserved pink ring on exterior of foot, just above projecting ridge, and on bottom of foot. Hard orange clay. Original diam. of foot, *ca.* 0.043 m.

Date: mid-fourth century B.C.

**11.** (Pl. 25, c, bottom left.) Base of a kantharos with low, broad foot.

Traces of dull black glaze on exterior with light red ring at top of foot. Yellow clay. Slip on underside with concentric wheel marks. Diam. of foot, 0.063 m.

Date: fourth century B.C.

**12.** (Pl. 25, c, bottom right.) Fragment from the bottom of a tall trefoil (?) oinochoe.

Dipped in dull black glaze on exterior. Wheel marks on vertical sides and on slightly concave bottom. Buff clay.

Date: fourth century B.C.

**13.** (Pl. 25, c, top center.) Clay lamp with large fragment missing from right side.

Covered, except for bottom of foot, with dull black glaze, chipped and peeling. Part of lug projecting from left side. L., 0.088 m. Howland type 25B; R. H. Howland, *The Athenian Agora,* IV, *Greek Lamps,* Princeton 1958, p. 73, no. 311.

Date: *ca.* 350-275 B.C.

**14.** (Pl. 25, d) Coarse-ware mortar fragment preserving full profile.

Broad, flat bottom; widely flaring sides. Heavy overhanging rim curved on upper surface. Projecting lug handle on rim. Coarse, gritty, yellow clay; rough on inside, slipped on outside. Original diam. at rim, *ca.* 0.33 m.

Date: late fourth to early third century B.C.

**15.** (Pl. 25, e) C-62-938. Stamped amphora handle of Corinthian B type.

Brownish red clay. Max. pres. dim., 0.08 m. Diam. of stamp, 0.022 m. Oval-shaped stamp with monogram ⍲; cf. *Hesperia,* XXII, 1953, p. 108, no. 166; XXXVIII, 1969, p. 10, no. 3.

Date: late fourth to early third century B.C.

Again, some earlier sherds were found in the upper enclosure, but most of the pottery seems to belong to the period 350-275 B.C. and later.

## THE LONG RUBBLE WALL

(Figure 3; Plates 25, f, 26, a-d)

Below and to the north of the upper enclosure are the remains of a massive fortification wall of rubble construction which follows the contours of the steep northern face of Stanotopi for a distance of *ca.* 600 m. (Fig. 3). In places the wall is completely destroyed, but other sections are standing to a height of about 1.80 m., and the line along the northern slope can be followed without difficulty. Along the

west and south side of the circuit only a few sections can be made out among the pine trees and brambles, and its exact course on these sides remains conjectural.

The wall begins at the east at a rugged crag which is steepest on its eastern side where it falls away to the sea. After following the contours of the northern slope in a westerly direction past the tower and the upper enclosure, the wall swings sharply to the north and slightly downhill in order to enclose a projecting ridge of Stanotopi whose sides are particularly steep. Failure to enclose this northward projection would have made the upper enclosure vulnerable to attack, since the ridge provides easy access to the level top of Stanotopi. The existence of the wall on this ridge renders the approach steep and rugged on all sides.

Only slight traces of the wall have survived on the western side of this ridge where it swings back in the direction of the upper enclosure. No evidence for a crosswall joining the eastern and western walls at their northern ends was detected, but it is unlikely that even this narrow opening would have been left unfortified. The western wall is better preserved higher up the hill at a point *ca.* 50 m. northwest of the upper enclosure. Here it is clearly heading straight for the northwest corner of the enclosure and can be traced almost up to the ruined wall which divides the enclosure from the low ground to the north. For a possible explanation of the gap in the west wall at this point, C on Figure 3, see *infra* p. 137.

About 75 m. from the eastern end of the large rubble wall there appears to have been a north-south crosswall linking it to the rubble fortification wall on the southern slope of Stanotopi. No clear remains of the crosswall have survived, but at B on Figure 3 there is what appears to be the corner formed by it and the south wall. The steepness of the rocks at this point makes it a logical place to build a crosswall.

From this corner the course of the south wall can be traced with difficulty for only *ca.* 70 m. Like its northern counterpart it follows the contours, but as these grow steeper, eventually ending in the ravine which cuts between the tower and the upper enclosure, the wall has been washed away. It is not clear how the ravine itself was fortified, but it is too precipitous to have carried a wall straight across it, especially if the construction was rubble. As the contours were utilized in almost all other sections of the wall, it is likely that here, too, the line chosen was one running high up on the slopes of the ravine and swinging northward.

On the western side of the ravine the line of fortification is resumed by the rubble wall which forms the southern edge of the upper enclosure, at A2 on Figure 3.

Construction throughout the wall (Pls. 25, f, 26) is of unworked stones the largest of which would probably not require more than two or three men to move them into position. Two faces are clearly distinguishable with a core of rubble packing (Pl. 26, c, d). There are no traces of mortar or cement in the wall. The thickness is *ca.* 2.50 m. and varies only slightly. In its better preserved sections the wall is

*ca.* 1.80 m. high (Pl. 26, a), but its thickness and the vast heaps of stones that have fallen from it all over the north slopes of Stanotopi show that on this side at least it once stood higher.

I have not discovered any gates in the long circuit of the rubble wall. The hill is steepest at the north and the east but the southern slopes, too, are rugged and show no very level means of access to the top of Stanotopi. Only on the west is the approach easy, along the crest of the mountain where the walls to be described in the next section are to be found. It is probable that the main entrance to the fort lay on this side, perhaps at the point where the western arm of the rubble wall approaches the wall of the upper enclosure, at C on Figure 3. In order to enter the fortified area at this point one would have to pass under the wall of the upper enclosure with the unshielded right side exposed. There are, however, no structural remains of a gate here, and it can be restored only tentatively.

Rubble walls are common in Greece, and they are notoriously difficult to date.[8] Very few objects have been found in and around the northern rubble wall, but none of the sherds or tile fragments is, in my opinion, necessarily later than the classical or Hellenistic period. Moreover, whatever its date, the wall clearly encloses almost the whole top of Stanotopi; the surface remains in this large area, which are concentrated at the tower and inside the upper enclosure, should also indicate the date of the rubble circuit. As we have seen, neither of these places has produced significant evidence of occupation in the Roman or Medieval eras. It is likely, therefore, that the large rubble wall, like the upper enclosure and the tower, is to be dated in the fourth or third century B.C. It does not follow, however, that all three elements were constructed at the same time. The large rubble wall may represent the expansion of a smaller, earlier fort on the upper enclosure. It is also possible, though, I think, unlikely, that the upper enclosure is later and represents the contraction of a larger fort whose limits were marked by the large rubble wall.

## THE WALLS TO THE WEST OF STANOTOPI

(Figure 1; Plate 27, b)

In addition to the road which passes over the base of Chersonesos, another route through the eastern end of Mount Oneion had to be defended. Two good paths enter the fairly broad defile between Stanotopi and Hill 427 m. at the northern foot of Mount Oneion near the modern quarry. After passing under the hill that carries the extensive remains of a Medieval fortress,[9] the paths climb steadily to reach the

[8] For a good discussion of the differences between ancient and medieval rubble walls see J. R. McCredie, *Hesperia*, Supplement XI, 1966, pp. 94-96.

[9] This remarkably well-preserved fort has been almost totally ignored in accounts of the defenses at the Isthmos in the Middle Ages. In its masonry, the pronounced batter of the walls,

lowest points on the crest of Oneion in walking time of ten to fifteen minutes. From the summit the paths descend to the southwest in the direction of ancient Solygeia.

All the fortifications on Stanotopi would have been built in vain if these two mountain tracks had remained open. Medieval defenders of Oneion realized the value of the paths and built their fortress low down in the pass, in order to intercept invaders and control traffic as it started up the mountain. As we might have guessed from the remains on the top of Stanotopi, the ancients had a different strategy. The absence of ancient defenses on the lower slopes shows that the broad entrance of the pass was left open. It was not until an invading army had made its way into the rapidly narrowing pass and up the mountain that it encountered the ancient defenses.

These consist of two long stretches of wall which follow the crest of the ridge between Stanotopi and peak 427 m. on an east-west line as indicated on Figure 1. The eastern wall can be traced for *ca.* 245 m. while the western section is preserved for *ca.* 255 m. A thick growth of small pine trees and brambles makes it difficult to trace the line of these two walls today, but enough remains to show that they were of rubble construction, similar to that of the circuit wall on Stanotopi, with two distinct faces and a core of smaller stones. Only in a few places do the walls rise as much as 0.50 m. above the ground. The stones are rather smaller than those in the large rubble wall on Stanotopi, but this is doubtless because the latter is built in rockier terrain where the supply of large stones is plentiful, and it probably does not indicate that the walls belong to two different periods. Their construction and thickness, 2.40-2.50 m., are identical.

Independent evidence for the date of the two walls in the pass is provided by a few sherds recovered from the wall where it was cut by army bulldozers during the construction of a road. They closely resemble those from the fort on Stanotopi and point to a date in the fourth century B.C.

**16.** (Pl. 27, b, lower right.) Fragment from the foot of a black-glazed kantharos with part of walls preserved.

Dull black glaze inside and outside with reddish bands on outside. Buff clay. Pres. h., 0.03 m.

Date: fourth century B.C.

**17.** (Pl. 27, b, lower left.) Fragment of a tall, trefoil (?) oinochoe with vertical sides.

Dipped in dull black glaze on exterior. Bottom slightly concave with wheel marks. Buff clay. Original diam. at base, *ca.* 0.045 m.

Date: fourth century B.C.

**18.** (Pl. 27, b, top.) Two fragments of a Corinthian plate with flat rim.

Semi-glazed; grooves at inner and outer edge of rim. Pale green clay. Original diam. of base, *ca.* 0.07 m.

Date: fourth century B.C. or possibly Hellenistic.

the drain holes, and the wide ramps on the interior faces of the walls, the fort is identical to the walls that guard another pass through Mount Oneion above Xylokeriza about two miles from the sea; see H. N. Fowler, R. Stillwell, *Corinth*, I, i, Cambridge, Mass., 1932, pp. 104-106. Fowler reports no ancient remains in this pass nor have I found any. Both paths leading into it are steep, winding, and narrow in contrast to the ancient paths at the eastern end of Oneion.

## HISTORICAL SURVEY

The surface remains give little indication that the eastern end of Mount Oneion was fortified much before *ca.* 350 B.C. This accords well with the literary evidence for military activity in the Isthmos. When Nikias and the Athenians landed on the beach at Solygeia in 425 B.C., there does not even appear to have been a lookout posted on Stanotopi, much less a fort, for the Corinthian reserves, who were at Kenchreai, learned that a battle was in progress in the plain of Solygeia not from signals but from the clouds of dust they saw rising up over Mount Oneion.[10] There does not seem to have been any military activity at the eastern end of the mountain during the Corinthian War, nor was it among the places garrisoned by the Spartans in the first decade of the fourth century B.C.[11] Significantly, it was not until after the fall of Spartan power at Leuktra in 371 B.C. and the beginning of the Theban invasions of the Peloponnesos that the eastern end of Mount Oneion became strategically prominent.

On his first invasion in 370/69 B.C. Epaminondas encountered no effective opposition at the Isthmos on his way toward Sparta.[12] Late in the same campaigning season, on his way home, the presence of Iphikrates and an Athenian force at Corinth led him to cross Mount Oneion by the eastern road past Kenchreai.[13] Iphikrates' plan of guarding Mount Oneion in order to intercept the Thebans failed because he neglected what Xenophon calls *τὴν καλλίστην παρὰ Κεγχρειὰς πάροδον*. His belated attempt to block the pass with the entire contingent of Athenian and Corinthian cavalry, when Epaminondas was already there, was a costly failure censured by Xenophon.[14]

In the following year Epaminondas again marched toward the Peloponnesos only to find his way blocked by the Spartans and the Athenians and their allies, who were guarding Mount Oneion in common.[15] Our sources do not mention permanent forti-

[10] Thucydides, IV, 44, 4. The signals mentioned earlier in the battle by Thucydides, IV, 42, 4, and by the scholiast on this passage need not have been sent from Mount Oneion.

[11] That Agesilaos did not approach the Isthmian sanctuary in 390 B.C. from the eastern end of Mount Oneion is made clear by Xenophon, *Hellenika*, IV, 5, 1, nor does the mountain figure in the rest of his campaign. For the Spartan garrisons at Sidous, Krommyon, Oinoe, and Lechaion see Xenophon, *Hell.*, IV, 4, 13 and 5, 19.

[12] This is an inference, legitimate I think, from Xenophon, *Hell.*, VI, 5, 22 and 37.

[13] Xenophon, *Hell.*, VI, 5, 50-52; Plutarch, *Pelopidas*, 24, 5.

[14] *Hell.*, VI, 5, 52. E. Delebecque's persuasive demonstration that the Athenian historian was living in Corinth 370-366 B.C. greatly increases the value of Xenophon's account of military operations near the east end of Mount Oneion. See Delebecque, *Essai sur la vie de Xénophon*, Paris, 1957, pp. 312-341. Xenophon has been charged with failure to perceive that Iphikrates' real aim was to hasten the withdrawal of the Thebans from the Peloponnesos by C. E. Bennett, *Xenophon, Hellenica Books V-VII*, Boston, 1892, p. 146, and by C. L. Brownson, *Xenophon's Hellenica*, New York, 1908, pp. 334-335.

[15] Xenophon, *Hell.*, VII, 1, 15-18 and 2, 5; Diodoros, XV, 68, 1-5; Polyainos, II, 3, 4 and 9; Frontinus, *Strat.*, II, 5, 26. On Xenophon's treatment of this encounter see Delebecque, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-316. Pausanias, IX, 15, 4 places the engagement in the vicinity of Lechaion.

fications on Mount Oneion at this time; indeed Diodoros describes the defenses as consisting of palisades and ditches, which probably indicates that the defenders drew up their line along the base of the mountain with the high ground at their backs. The Spartans and Pellenians guarded the most accessible place,[16] and here Epaminondas made his attempt to break through. That this place was not the level road over the col at the base of the Chersonesos is suggested by Xenophon's statement that the Thebans actually climbed over the mountain.[17] It seems clear then that the Spartans and Pellenians were stationed in front of a pass over the mountain and, if it was the most accessible one, it is very likely to have been that between Stanotopi and peak 427 m. The rubble walls which block the two paths in this pass are not mentioned by Xenophon, who describes Epaminondas' passage in great detail, nor by any of our other sources. Moreover, Xenophon states that the Spartans withdrew to the high ground as a last resort; it was not their original position. This would suggest that the walls in question were not yet part of the defenses of Mount Oneion, an inference which is to some extent supported by the pottery found with them and described *supra* p. 138. After forcing his way past the Spartans and Pellenians, Epaminondas safely crossed the mountain and joined his Arkadian, Argive, and Elian allies in an attack on Sikyon.

In two successive campaigns Epaminondas had demonstrated to the Corinthians and their allies that the natural barrier of Mount Oneion could be crossed at a critical point near its eastern end, even when it was under guard. If in the future it was to play an effective role in blocking movement through the Isthmos, the mountain had to be strengthened by something more permanent than palisades and ditches.

Xenophon's account of the third Theban invasion, which took place in 366 B.C., suggests that the defenders were slow to learn.[18] In criticizing the temerity of the Spartan polemarch in the previous campaign, Xenophon observed that even from the hill to which the Spartans had retreated it was still possible for them to block the Thebans' path and for supplies to reach them safely from Kenchreai.[19] The advantage of occupying the heights, however, was more quickly grasped by Epaminondas, for, on the eve of his third invasion, he instructed his ally Peisias, the Argive general, to occupy part of Oneion, thereby assuring himself of safe passage over the mountain. Having learned that the Spartan and Athenian guard on Oneion was being carelessly maintained, Peisias succeeded in occupying " the hill that over-

[16] Xenophon, *Hell.*, VII, 1, 15, *κατὰ τὸ ἐπιμαχώτατον*; Diodoros, XV, 68, 4, *εὐεφοδώτατον εἶναι τόπον καθ' ὃν οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι παρεφύλαττον.*

[17] Xenophon, *Hell.*, VII, 1, 17-18, *ἀπορούντων τῶν Θηβαίων πῶς χρὴ ἐκ τοῦ πρὸς Σικυῶνα βλέπαντος καταβῆναι ἢ πάλιν ἀπελθεῖν . . . οἱ δὲ Θηβαῖοι ἀσφαλῶς καταβάντες . . .* Cf. VII, 2, 5.

[18] Xenophon, *Hell.*, VII, 1, 41-42. In *Klio,* LI, 1969, pp. 177-199, J. R. Wiseman argues persuasively that the third invasion took place in 366 B.C. not 367 B.C. as is generally assumed. Professor Wiseman kindly sent me a copy of this important paper prior to publication.

[19] *Hell.,* VII, 1, 17.

looks Kenchreai"[20] with two thousand hoplites. The maneuver was effected at night and was apparently unopposed. Peisias carried with him provisions for seven days; within that time Epaminondas led his Thebans safely over the pass.

The fact that Peisias was able to move two thousand hoplites up from Argos, through the hills west of Solygeia, and onto the eastern summit of Mount Oneion without any serious interference shows that the guard on Oneion was very lax indeed. It is difficult also to account for the success of his maneuver, even at night, if Stanotopi and the pass to the west of it carried at this time the permanent fortifications described in the first part of this paper. Xenophon, who probably knew the terrain at first-hand, makes no mention of a fort on Mount Oneion at this time; apparently the guards were down in their former positions along the northern base of the mountain.[21] The Argives stayed on Stanotopi for only a few days and probably did not leave any structural remains behind them.[22]

After this episode of 366 B.C. there is no explicit reference to Mount Oneion in our sources for at least a century. The surface remains on Stanotopi, however, show that the tower and the rubble walls had been completed by about the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. If our inference from the Argive attack described by Xenophon is valid, we can narrow down the probable date of construction to *ca.* 366-325 B.C.

Corinthian history of this period is not richly documented, but there are a few occasions on which the Corinthians may have decided to strengthen the defenses of Mount Oneion in a permanent manner. In the autumn of 366 B.C. Corinth forestalled an Athenian attempt to gain control of her territory by first sending home all Athenian troops on garrison duty in the Corinthia, and secondly by refusing to admit into Kenchreai an Athenian fleet commanded by Chares, who claimed that he had come to help the Corinthians remove those who were plotting against the city.[23] The Athenian guards were promptly replaced by Corinthian troops, but the open break with Athens left Corinth in a dangerous position. Her territory had been the scene of heavy fighting for the past three years and, even with Spartan and Athenian help, she had not been able adequately to defend it. Her diplomats were hard at work in Thebes and Sparta trying to arrange the most suitable terms of peace, but at home the Corinthians did not remain inactive. In fact there seems to have been at this time a vigorous attempt to strengthen Corinth's military position. Mercenary troops were

[20] Xenophon, *Hell.*, VII, 1, 41, ὁ Πεισίας . . . καταλαμβάνει νύκτωρ μετὰ δισχιλίων ὁπλιτῶν τὸν ὑπὲρ Κεγχρειῶν λόφον. I take this to refer to Stanotopi and the ridge immediately to the west, since this is the only part of Mount Oneion overlooking Kenchreai on which two thousand troops could be stationed.

[21] This is admittedly a dangerous argument from silence, especially in view of the presence of a few sherds on Stanotopi that are earlier than *ca.* 350 B.C. It is possible that a fort had been built in 368 B.C. after Epaminondas had withdrawn.

[22] Xenophon, *Hell.*, VII, 1, 42, does not specify the route followed by Epaminondas on his way home.

[23] Xenophon, *Hell.*, VII, 4, 4-5.

brought in both to guard the city and to conduct raids on hostile neighbors.[24] Timophanes, brother of Timoleon, rose to power as commander of these forces and seems to have followed a policy of actively asserting Corinth's military strength.[25]

Epaminondas' marches over Mount Oneion and the Argive capture of Stanotopi in 366 B.C. had clearly exposed the inadequacy of previous attempts to guard the natural barrier. It is possible that, in the outburst of military activity which followed the break with Athens in 366 B.C., Timophanes and his followers tried to correct these faults by constructing the tower and fort on Stanotopi.

Timophanes' ascendancy, however, came to an abrupt end in 365 B.C., when he was murdered by his brother, and for the next quarter of a century Corinth strove for more or less peaceful co-existence with Thebes, Sparta, and Athens. She took no part in the battle of Mantineia in 362 B.C. and we hear of no military operations in her territory until the arrival of Philip II after the battle of Chaironeia in 338 B.C.[26]

On the capital of his new Hellenic League Philip imposed a Macedonian garrison whose headquarters were on Acrocorinth.[27] That the strategic passes over Mount Oneion would have been neglected by Philip seems very unlikely in view of the hostile posture of Sparta at this time. At any rate, the surface remains show clearly that the fort was in existence before the last third of the century. Philip's establishment of the Macedonian garrison at Corinth thus becomes a second possible occasion on which the Stanotopi fort could have been constructed. Even if Philip did not actually build the fort, it is probable that Macedonian troops occupied it from *ca.* 338 B.C. onward.

The surface pottery cannot be dated with sufficient precision to choose between these two candidates for the date of construction of the fort. There may also have been occasions other than 366/5 and *ca.* 338/7 B.C. when such fortifications were considered necessary, although they have left no trace in our literary tradition. During most of this period, however, Corinth's attention appears to have been devoted to the affairs of Syracuse and the rest of Sicily. The pottery does enable us to state with some confidence that the fort was in existence before the arrival of Polyperchon, who used Corinth as a base in his struggles against Kassander.

In 316 B.C. Alexander, the son of Polyperchon, who commanded the garrison at Corinth, succeeded in blocking the Isthmos so effectively that the invading Kassander had to ferry his troops across to the Peloponnesos from Megara to Epidauros in boats.[28] The fort on Mount Oneion no doubt formed an important part of Alexander's blockade.

[24] Xenophon, *Hell.*, VII, 4, 6-10.

[25] Diodoros, XVI, 65, who, however, misdates the murder of Timophanes to 346 B.C.; Plutarch, *Timoleon*, III, 3-IV, 5; Nepos, *Timoleon*, 2-4; Aristotle, *Politics*, V, 1306 A 23.

[26] On Mantineia see Xenophon, *Hell.*, VII, 5, 6 and 15, 16. For Corinthians at the battle of Chaironeia see Strabo, IX, 2, 37.

[27] Plutarch, *Aratos*, 23.

[28] Diodoros, XIX, 54, 3.

Kassander invaded again in the following year and made Kenchreai his initial target.[29] The port city fell into his hands, and he also gained control of two forts which were held by Alexander. Diodoros, who is our only authority for the two fortresses, gives no topographical details about them, but it is reasonable to look for them in the vicinity of the heaviest fighting. In this case the fort on Mount Oneion becomes a leading candidate for one of the strongholds taken by Kassander. After securing Kenchreai, he probably attacked the fort which dominated the harbor and the roads leading through Mount Oneion to the south.

After joining forces later in 315 B.C. Polyperchon and Kassander were able to maintain their hold on Corinth in the face of Telesphoros' invasion in 313 B.C.,[30] but they were no longer able to prevent Ptolemy from taking it without a battle from Alexander's widow, Kratesipolis, in 308 B.C.[31] No mention is made of the fort on Stanotopi during either the period of Ptolemaic control or the capture of Corinth by Demetrios Poliorketes in 303 B.C.[32] In fact, evidence for the defense of the Isthmos is totally lacking until 279 B.C. when the Peloponnesians were threatened by Brennos and his invading Gauls. Instead of defending Mount Oneion, it seems to have been the intention of the Peloponnesians at this time to wall off the Isthmos from sea to sea, but Pausanias, our only source, does not explicitly state that the plan was ever carried out.[33]

For the student of Corinthian history the fragmentary nature of our evidence for the Chremonidean War is particularly frustrating, since it was in the Corinthia that Areus, the Spartan king, was defeated and killed by Antigonos Gonatas in 265/4 B.C. This decisive event, which robbed Athens of effective support on land, occurred while Areus was marching back to the Peloponnesos after his withdrawal from Attika.[34] Since Acrocorinth and its supporting forts were still in Macedonian hands, Areus may have found his way blocked at the Isthmos. He was short of supplies and seems to have been forced to fight in the Corinthia the battle against

[29] Diodoros, XIX, 63, 4.

[30] Diodoros, XIX, 74, 1-2.

[31] Diodoros, XX, 37, 1-2; Polyainos, VIII, 58.

[32] Demetrios, however, captured Kenchreai as a prelude to his attack on Corinth; see Plutarch, *Demetrios*, 23. For his capture of Corinth see *ibid.*, 25 and Diodoros, XX, 103, 1-4.

[33] Pausanias, VII, 6, 7-8. For a trans-Isthmian wall possibly constructed at this time see J. R. Wiseman, *Hesperia*, XXXII, 1963, pp. 248-275.

[34] Our only source is the compressed account in Justinus, XXVI, 2 and Prologue XXVI; cf. Plutarch, *Agis*, 3 and Pausanias, III, 6, 4. For the sequence of events I have followed the reconstruction of J. R. McCredie, *Hesperia*, Supplement XI, 1966, pp. 109-115, which avoids the awkward duplication of Areus' invasion of Attika found in most modern accounts of the Chremonidean War. We do not know how Areus reached Attika from Sparta in the first place but, in view of the Macedonian garrison at Corinth and the Gauls whom Antigonos had stationed at Megara, it may be suggested that the Spartan army was ferried across the Saronic Gulf in Ptolemaic ships. For the Gallic mercenaries and their leader Bricco see now C. B. Welles, *Klio*, LII, 1970, pp. 477-490.

Antigonos which he had hesitated to undertake, under more favorable circumstances, in Attika. It is possible, therefore, that the fort on Stanotopi played a part in the blockade of Areus.

Another reason for Macedonian occupation of our fort during the Chremonidean War may be suggested, although no ancient text can be cited in its favor. Patroklos, the Ptolemaic admiral, had control of the Saronic Gulf and had set up fortified positions on the coast of Attika at Rhamnous, Kynosoura at Marathon, Koroni, and Vouliagmeni. He also had a fort on the small island near Sounion which was named after him.[35] It is probable, therefore, that Patroklos posed a real threat to Kenchreai.[36] A Ptolemaic attack on the Corinthian port, followed by occupation of the eastern end of Mount Oneion, would have seriously weakened Antigonos' hold on the Isthmos. It is difficult to imagine that Antigonos would have neglected at this time the defense of so vital a part of the Corinthia.

In describing the revolt of Alexander, son of Krateros, and the capture of Acrocorinth by Antigonos in 245 B.C. and then by Aratos in 243 B.C., our sources do not mention the defenses on Mount Oneion. It is not until the confrontation between Kleomenes and the combined forces of Antigonos Doson and Aratos at the Isthmos in 224 B.C. that we have clear evidence for the fortification of the eastern passes.[37] The Spartan king occupied the Long Walls to Lechaion and filled the pass between Acrocorinth and the western end of Mount Oneion with ditches and palisades. The rest of the mountain was defended in such a way that entrance into the Peloponnesos was completely blocked. When messengers arrived from Argos with the news that their city was in revolt against Kleomenes, they could reach Aratos only by sea. When the Achaian general took fifteen hundred men to aid the insurgents, he was forced to sail from the Isthmos over to Epidauros. There were no weak links in Kleomenes' chain. The fort on Stanotopi probably served once again as the anchor at the eastern end. Antigonos failed to break through, and only dissension in Kleomenes' rear forced the Spartans to abandon their line.

This appears to be the last occasion on which the defense of Mount Oneion is mentioned in the written sources. It is possible that Philip V maintained a garrison there during the Social War, 220-217 B.C., since Corinth, which he regarded as one of the " fetters of Greece," was for a time his headquarters.[38] By the time of the

[35] For these posts see McCredie, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-16, 18-24, 30-32, 41-45.

[36] The threat would have been more serious if, as some have held, Patroklos had a garrison at Methana-Arsinoe, but the evidence is only circumstantial. For a brief discussion with bibliography, L. Robert, *Hellenica*, XI-XII, 1960, pp. 157-159.

[37] On these events see Polybios, II, 52, 5-54, 1; Plutarch, *Kleomenes*, 20-21; *Aratos*, 40-44.

[38] Polybios, IV, 13-37; Plutarch, *Aratos*, 16, 5. F. W. Walbank has suggested that in returning from the battle of Kaphyai in 220 B.C. the Aitolians kept south of Acrocorinth, after leaving Sikyon, and then crossed the Isthmos, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, I, Oxford, 1957, p. 461. If they were trying to avoid the garrison on Acrocorinth, they probably did not march between

Second Macedonian War and the siege of Corinth in 198 B.C., however, the Macedonian garrison seems to have been restricted to the fortress of Acrocorinth; Flamininus was unimpeded in his movements across the Isthmos, and the fleet of the Romans and of Attalos of Pergamon had taken control of Kenchreai.[39]

Corinth was the main base of operations for the Romans in the war with Antiochos III, but there was no actual fighting in the Corinthia. In their last efforts to expel the Romans during the Achaian War, the Corinthians and their allies probably did not revive the strategy of blocking off the Isthmos. Although the final battle in 146 B.C. seems to have been fought at the Isthmos, the Romans held Kenchreai throughout.[40]

The fact that the defenses on Mount Oneion are last mentioned in 224 B.C. is in agreement with the evidence of the surface pottery on Stanotopi. Conclusions based on this kind of archaeological evidence must always remain tentative and subject to correction either by excavation or by more thorough surface investigation. The available evidence, however, both literary and archaeological, suggests that the fort on Mount Oneion was occupied for a relatively brief period of time, *ca.* 350-224 B.C., during which it was an integral part of the defenses of the Isthmos. After the Roman conquest it was abandoned as no longer necessary; not until Medieval times was further thought given to controlling traffic through the east end of the mountain. Fortunately, the Medieval fort was built lower down in the pass and the Stanotopi fortifications were allowed to survive as one of the few known examples of a military camp in the Corinthia.[41]

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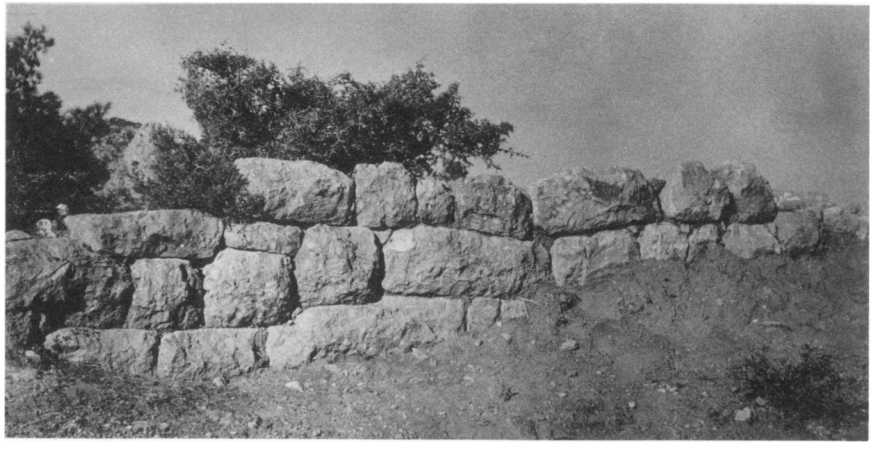
it and the west end of Mount Oneion. They are more likely to have chosen the road through the east end of the mountain past Kenchreai, but it is impossible to draw firm conclusions from these conjectures as to the existence of a fort on Stanotopi at this time.

[39] Polybios, XVIII, 16, 4; Livy, XXXII, 17-23; 40, 5-9.

[40] On the military operations in 146 B.C. see Polybios, XXXIX, 8, 6; Livy, *Periochae*, LII; Pausanias, VII, 15, 11-16, 10; Dio Cassius, XXI, 72; Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustribus,* 60.

[41] I am greatly indebted to W. W. Cummer for preparing Figures 1-3 and for helpful counsel during our visits to Stanotopi. It must be stressed that Figure 3 is a measured sketch plan; we have not attempted a detailed topographical map. Valuable assistance in identifying the pottery was generously provided by Virginia Grace, Maria Petropoulakou, and C. K. Williams. An earlier draft of this paper was read and greatly improved by W. W. Cummer, J. R. McCredie, R. L. Scranton, C. K. Williams, and J. R. Wiseman, to all of whom I am deeply grateful. It is a pleasure to acknowledge financial assistance generously contributed by the American Philosophical Society and the Humanities Research Institute of the University of California to my work in Greece.

a. Southwest Corner. Exterior



b. Interior Face of Western Wall

c. Northwest Corner. Exterior

d. View of Interior from South

Tower

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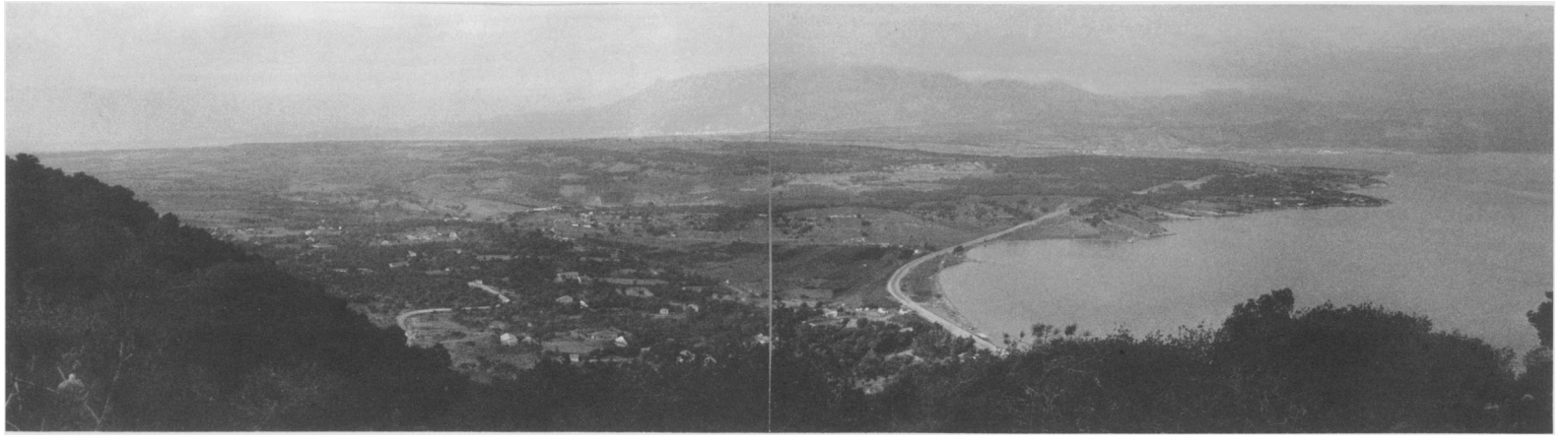
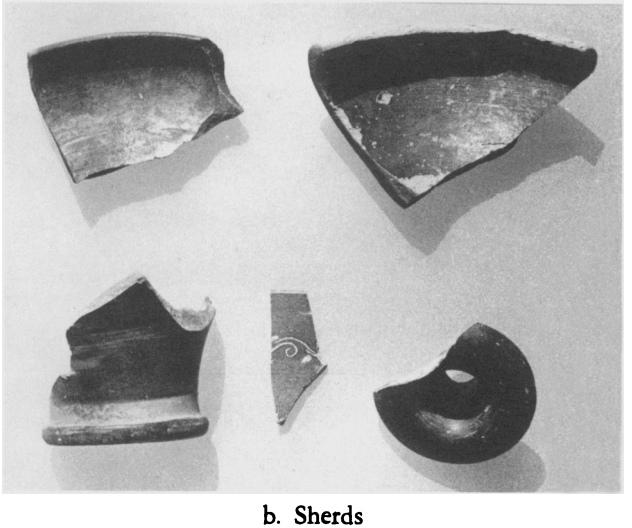


a. View of Isthmos of Corinth from the Tower

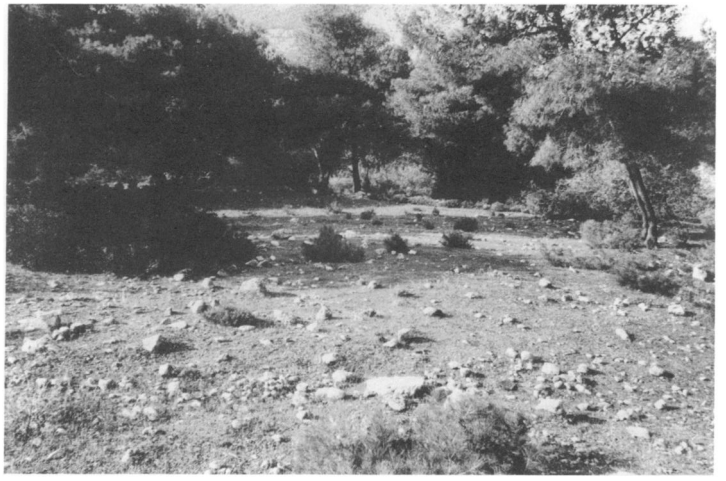


b. Sherds

c. Amphora Fragment

d. Stamped Amphora Handle

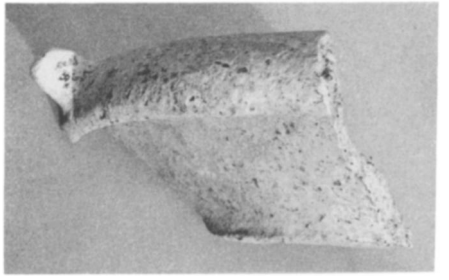
Tower



a. From Southeast

b. Cistern

c. Sherds



d. Mortar Fragment

e. Stamped Amphora Handle

f. North Rubble Wall

Upper Enclosure

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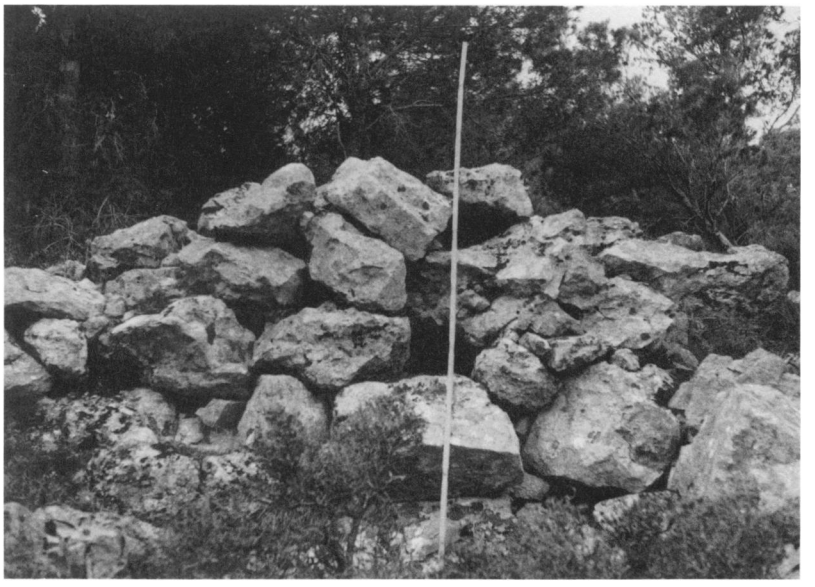
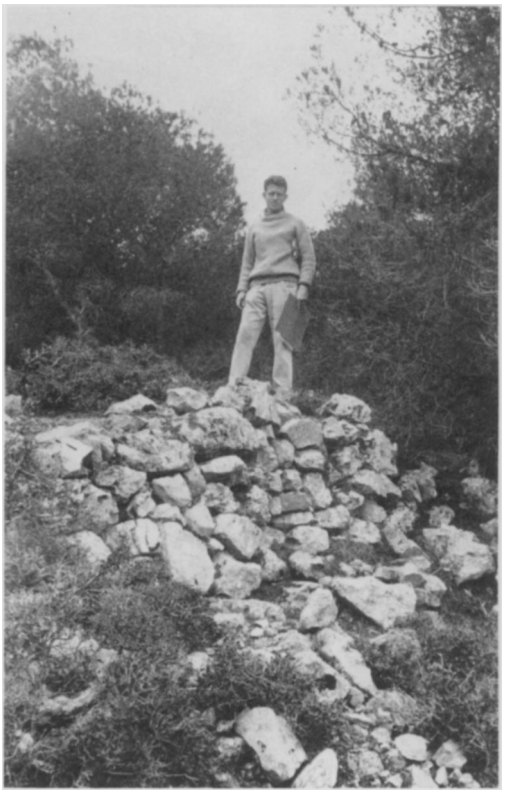
PLATE 25

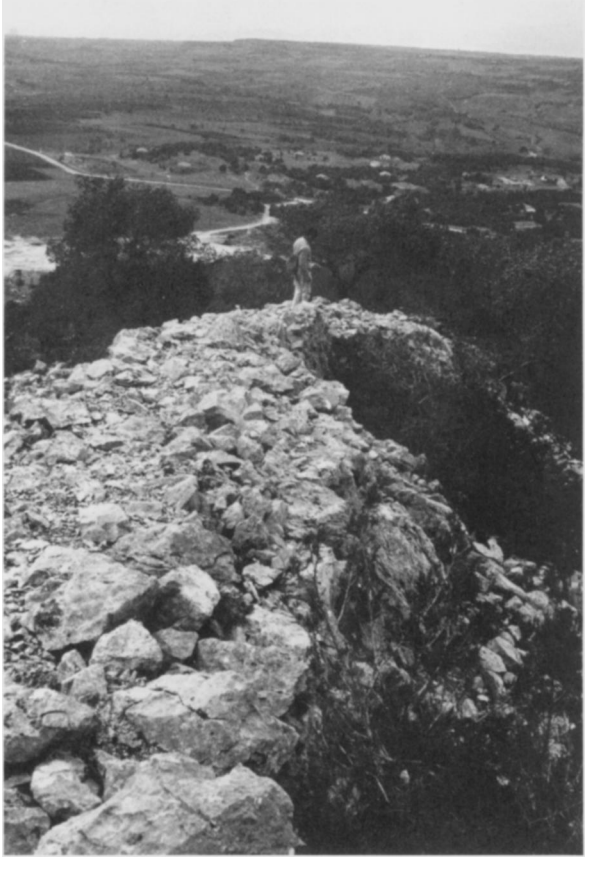


a. Height of Stick: 2 m.



b.

c. Looking East towards Chersonesos



d. Looking North towards Isthmos

North Rubble Wall.

a. Mount Oneion from the North.
Pass between Stanotopi and Hill 427 m.

b. Sherds from Rubble Wall in Pass

c. Pass between Stanotopi and Hill 427 m. from Summit looking North

d. South Side of Mount Oneion between Stanotopi and Hill 427 m.