

# THE LOCATION OF NASOS AND ITS PLACE IN HISTORY

(PLATES 19–20)

IN THE AUTUMN of 211 B.C.,<sup>1</sup> the Romans made an alliance with the Aitolians.<sup>2</sup> They hoped thereby to counter a treaty struck previously between Philip V and Hannibal (in 215) by occupying the Macedonian king with a war in Greece. According to Livy's account (xxvi.24.8), the Aitolians were particularly impressed by the Roman promise to help them recover dominance over their western neighbor Akarnania (Fig. 1). Some fifty years before, Aitolia had tried to gain control there by means of a treaty stipulating *ἰσοπολιτεία*.<sup>3</sup> Disputes arose concerning the treaty's application which persisted until Aitolia made an agreement with Alexander II of Epeiros (ca. 252–250) to invade Akarnania, forcefully dissolve its *κοινόν*, and partition the territory. As a matter of course, the southern *poleis* fell to Aitolia, the northern ones to Epeiros.<sup>4</sup> This arrangement lasted some twenty years before the northern cities regained their independence and established a new *κοινόν* whose major policy was the liberation of the south. This they managed to achieve with the help of Philip V who campaigned successfully in southern Akarnania in 219. By the time the Aitolians were forced to recognize the new *status quo* in the treaty of Naupaktos (217 B.C.), all the cities but Stratos seem to have been liberated from their control.<sup>5</sup> The Aitolians were quite displeased with this situation, and presumably their mood was communicated to the Romans by certain Aitolian *principes* who were cautiously approached in 212 by the

<sup>1</sup> The exact year in which this agreement was made is a matter of dispute. Apparent inconsistencies in Livy's account have caused some scholars to place this treaty in 212. For a clear discussion of the differing viewpoints and reasons for preferring 211 to 212, see F. W. Walbank, *Philip V of Macedon*, Cambridge 1940, pp. 301–304.

<sup>2</sup> This paper stems from research conducted in Akarnania during the years 1979, 1980, and 1983. I express here my gratitude to the Greek Archaeological Service for granting me the permission to conduct a survey along the western coast of Akarnania, to the American School of Classical Studies at Athens whose grant of a fellowship enabled me to begin my work in Akarnania, and to the Archaeological Institute of America, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the University of South Florida for the additional support which made this study possible. I also thank my wife Suzanne P. Murray, for her help in surveying Portes and Elleniko, and G. Kelly Tipps and A. J. Graham for their helpful comments concerning the first draft of this article.

Throughout the notes, I refer frequently to my dissertation; for ease of reference, I have adopted the following abbreviation: *CSWA* = William M. Murray, *The Coastal Sites of Western Akarnania: A Topographical-Historical Survey*, diss. University of Pennsylvania, 1982.

<sup>3</sup> *IG IX* 1<sup>2</sup>, 3A. Aitolia commonly used such treaties, it seems, to bind members of her League to herself; cf. Schwahn, *RE* (*Συμπολιτεία*) IV.1, cols. 1177–1178.

<sup>4</sup> For this episode and the evidence concerning the border between the two spheres of influence, see *CSWA*, pp. 326–331.

<sup>5</sup> For a more extensive discussion of these events and their chronology, plus a full listing of our sources, see *CSWA*, pp. 332–340. For Philip's Akarnanian campaign of 219, see Polybios, iv.63.7–66.3, and for the major provision of the treaty of Naupaktos (. . . ὥστ' ἔχειν ἀμφοτέρους ἀ νῦν ἔχουσιν), see Polybios, v.103.7.

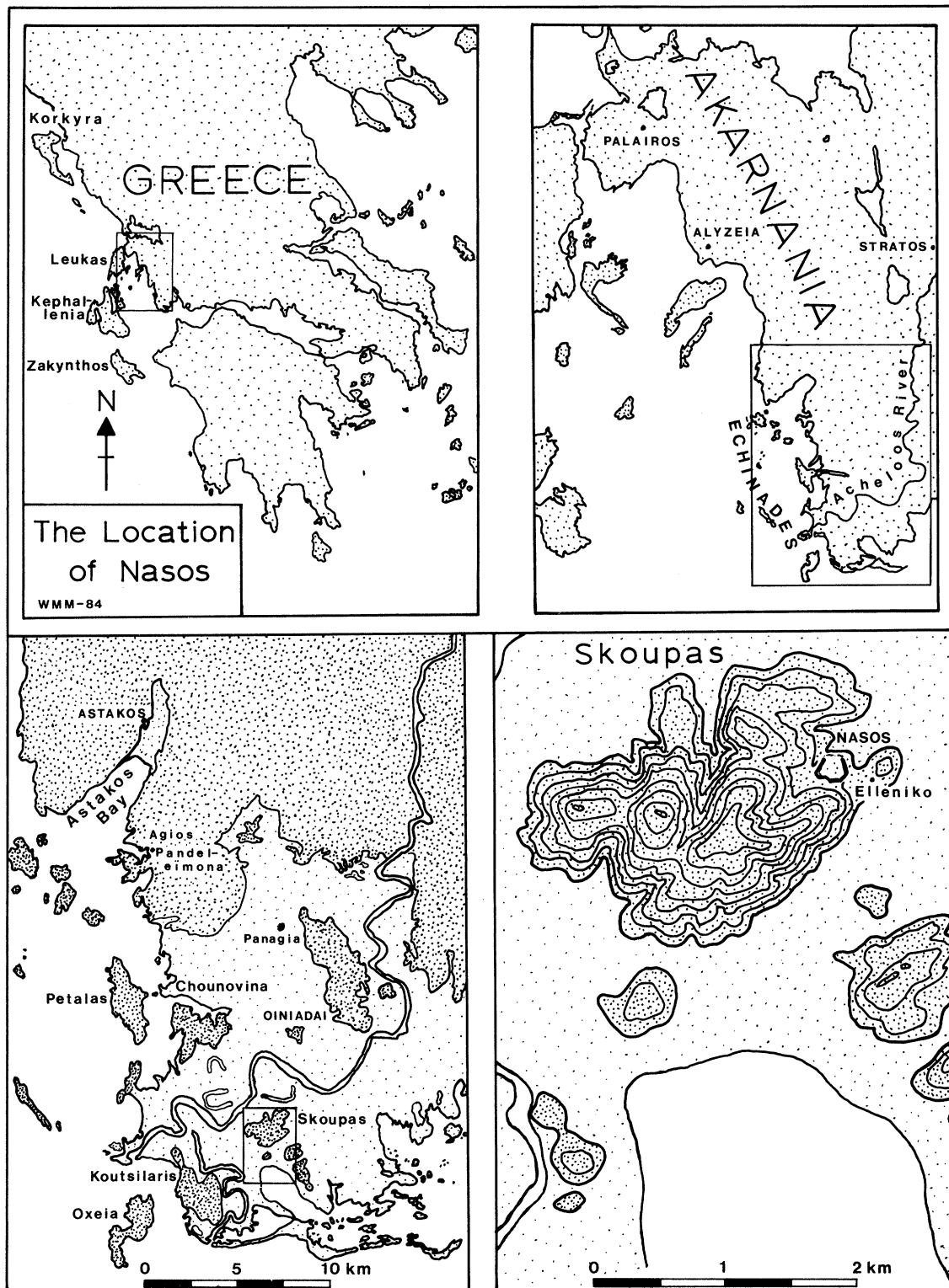


FIG. 1. The location of Nasos (silted areas are indicated in c and d by sparse dots)

propraetor M. Valerius Laevinus (Livy, xxvi.24.1). Rome's record in the war against Hannibal had not inspired overwhelming confidence in her strength as an ally, yet Laevinus won over the Aitolians to a Roman alliance by skillfully stressing her recent victories, her traditional commitment to her allies, and her desire to restore Akarnania to Aitolian control.<sup>6</sup> Considering the history of the preceding half century, it is not surprising that the last point was the most persuasive.

For their part, the Romans acted immediately and demonstrated to the Aitolians the wisdom of their recent decision. Laevinus neutralized Philip's potential naval bases near Aitolia by capturing Zakynthos and two Akarnanian towns near the mouth of the Acheloös River: Oiniadai and Nasos (Livy, xxvi.24.15). The propraetor had executed the whole affair with brilliance and capped a significant military achievement with the cementing of his earlier diplomatic coup. These last two places were immediately handed over to the Aitolians as the tangible benefits of their recent alliance.<sup>7</sup>

The importance of Oiniadai to Aitolia is self-evident. This *polis* was the most important community of southern Akarnania, controlling the lower floodplain of the fertile Acheloös delta and serving as an important trading center for inland cities (most notably for Aitolian-controlled Stratos). Aitolia had actively contested the possession of Oiniadai with its Akarnanian inhabitants for more than a century.<sup>8</sup> The city's importance is reflected in its impressive remains, located on a small islandlike hill called Tri kardho first identified with Oiniadai by W. M. Leake in the early years of the 19th century.<sup>9</sup> The site displays a substantial, well-built circuit wall, 5.3 km. in length, a separately fortified acropolis, some poorly preserved house remains, a bath, a roughly constructed temple, a small theater, and two fortified harbors, one complete with shipsheds, the other with a medium-sized pier.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Livy, xxvi.24.2–6. The view that Aitolia did not jump at the chance to enter into a Roman alliance, as is frequently stated, is that of Walbank, *op. cit.* (footnote 1 above), p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> We must not allow the handing over of these places to obscure the true significance of Laevinus' military accomplishment. Oiniadai's harbor had recently been fortified by Philip to act as a naval base (Polybios, iv.65.8, 11). As Walbank notes (*Commentary on Polybios* I, Oxford 1957, p. 520), Oiniadai was a base equally important to Philip for operations in the Corinthian Gulf or up the western coast of Greece to the Ambracian Gulf; it insured him a permanent presence on the west-coast trading lane to Italy. As concerns Zakynthos, the fact that it could also be used as a west-coast naval base can be inferred from two passages of Polybios (v.3.3–4.13 and 102.10). In the late 220's, the Aitolians had used Kephallenia as a naval base from which to harass the Peloponnesos and the coasts of Akarnania and Epeiros. Philip tried unsuccessfully to eject the Aitolian garrison from Zakynthian Pale in 219 and had plans for establishing his own base there (cf. Polybios, v.4.1). Two years later, he did manage to establish a presence on Zakynthos (Polybios, v.102.10) before the *status quo* was recognized in the treaty of Naupaktos. The importance of Nasos as a potential base can be inferred from its inclusion in the first objectives of the propraetor Laevinus. Laevinus' success in managing this whole affair helped to foster the growth of a personal *clientela* in Aitolia. Twenty-two years later, the Roman who apparently represented Aitolian interests was Laevinus' son Gaius (cf. Livy, xxxviii.9.8, 10.2; Polybios, xxi.29.10–12 and 31.2).

<sup>8</sup> For a concise account of the border disputes between Akarnania and Aitolia involving Oiniadai, see Kirsten, *RE* (Oiniadai) XVII.2, cols. 2111–2214. The first historical record of trouble dates to ca. 330 B.C. (cf. Diodoros, xviii.8.6 and Plutarch, *Alexander*, 49.8).

<sup>9</sup> W. M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece* III, London 1835, p. 556.

<sup>10</sup> For a concise treatment of the remains at Oiniadai, plus references to all the pertinent work that has been conducted at the site (up to 1937), see Kirsten, *op. cit.* (footnote 8 above), cols. 2214–2223. *CSWA* (pp. 32–45) provides a discussion of Oiniadai's two separate harbors. I have since changed my opinion concerning the date

The importance of Nasos is more difficult to determine, largely because it is mentioned directly on no other occasion, but also because its site, and thus its remains, have never been satisfactorily located.<sup>11</sup> Only three shreds of evidence exist to help in locating the community called Nasos: its descriptive name, meaning “island”, its linkage (on the three occasions it is mentioned<sup>12</sup>) with Oiniadai, and the fact that it was captured by a naval force whose other exploits involved operations to Zakynthos (an island), Oiniadai (a coastal town on a river), and a return to Korkyra (an island).<sup>13</sup> Considering the implications of its name, its capture by a naval force, and its connection with Oiniadai, the site ought to be located on a hill, an island in antiquity, close to Oiniadai in the lower floodplain of the Acheloös River. This much was recognized long ago. W. M. Leake believed Nasos might be located on the island of Petalas, and a quartet of scholars, led by L. Heuzey, chose a small hill north of Oiniadai called Panagia.<sup>14</sup> The major problem with both identifications is the total lack on either hill of any corroborative ancient remains suitable for a small town site.<sup>15</sup>

In 1918, K. A. Rhomaios briefly described a small fortified site, locally known as Portes, on a hill called Skoupas five kilometers south of Trikardho. He reported a poorly preserved circuit of “Pelagic” (i.e., rough polygonal) masonry, approximately 1500 meters in length, which displayed six semicircular towers (“most rare, elsewhere in Akarnania”). Some 500 meters “toward the sea,” he also reported a well-preserved tower, called Elleniko,

of the southern harbor and believe that it can be contemporary with the northern harbor (i.e., the one with the shipsheds). My original objections based on considerations of local sea-level changes (cf. *CSWA*, p. 45) are vitiated by the likely presence of a fault running up the Acheloös Valley. The existence of this fault (made known to me by Professor J. C. Kraft of the Geology Department at the University of Delaware) renders data concerning changes in sea level from other western Akarnanian harbors invalid as concerns the harbors of Oiniadai.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Kirsten, *op. cit.* (footnote 8 above), col. 2209, who concludes: “Unsicher ist die Lage von Nasos . . .”

<sup>12</sup> See Polybios, ix.39.2 and Livy, xxvi.24.15 and 25.10.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Livy, xxvi.24.15–16.

<sup>14</sup> Leake, *op. cit.* (footnote 9 above), p. 568; L. Heuzey, *Le Mont Olympe et l'Acarnanie*, Paris 1860, p. 457; C. Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland I*, Leipzig 1862, p. 122 (but cf. footnote 15 below); H. G. Lolling, *Urbaedeker* (an unpublished guide for the Baedeker series dating to 1878, a copy of which is held by the German Institute of Archaeology in Athens), p. ccvii; and E. Oberhummer, *Akarnanien, Ambrakia, Amphiloehia, Leukas im Altertum*, München 1887, p. 33. Fiehn, *RE* (Nasos) XVI.2, col. 1793, also placed this site at Panagia. Presumably Walbank (*op. cit.* [footnote 7 above], II, p. 178) has Panagia in mind when he incorrectly refers to a small island to the “west” of Oiniadai. To his credit, however, he favors locating Nasos on one of the Echinades Islands. This overwhelming body of opinion is reflected in this site’s placement (apparently at Panagia) in a recent atlas edited by N. G. L. Hammond (*Atlas of the Greek and Roman World in Antiquity*, Park Ridge, N.J. 1981, pls. 12, 14a).

<sup>15</sup> Bursian (*op. cit.*, p. 122) does note the existence of a fortress (“ein Kastell”) on a small island (“jetzt τὸ νησί, die Insel genannt”) in the lake (the area has now been drained) north of Oiniadai, presumably on Panagia. Some later commentators have followed this erroneous report and state, as a matter of fact, the existence of a fortified site on Panagia; cf. Fiehn, *op. cit.* (footnote 14 above), col. 1793; Kirsten, *op. cit.* (footnote 8 above), col. 2209, line 28; and Walbank, *op. cit.* (footnote 7 above), II, p. 178. I have visited both areas and noticed no significant ancient remains appropriate to a site like Nasos. Nor did any of the local shepherds know of ancient remains appropriate to the descriptive term “Kastell”. Since Bursian elsewhere in his account of Akarnania draws from Heuzey’s work (cf. Bursian, *op. cit.*, p. 109, note 1, etc.), his misconception probably stems from Heuzey’s own account of Panagia (Heuzey, *op. cit.*, p. 457): “Je ne pus m’y rendre, faute de moyens de communications; mais les habitants m’assurèrent qu’il y restait des vestiges de murs ruinés; ce lieu servit encore de refuge aux populations environnantes, pendant l’insurrection grecque.”

built in “Pleuronic” (i.e., coursed trapezoidal) masonry.<sup>16</sup> Although Rhomaïos had found a perfect candidate for Nasos, he curiously chose to identify the site with an obscure town called Athenai. Considering that our knowledge of Athenai is restricted to its name, this identification (for which no explicit reason is given) is surely too rash and should be abandoned if a better alternative can be shown to exist.<sup>17</sup> Both the physical nature of the remains and the general location of Portes/Elleniko fit perfectly what is known of the community called Nasos. The following discussion presents the evidence to justify this identification and then explores the resulting historical implications.

### THE REMAINS AT PORTES AND ELLENIKO

Portes is located on the eastern side of Skoupas, its walls crowning a hill due south of the small chapel called Agia Paraskevi (Fig. 1:d, Pl. 19:a). This chapel is set in what would have been the community’s harbor, a small bay offering excellent protection from the prevailing westerlies that affect this coastline.<sup>18</sup> Although the fortification walls of the site are poorly preserved, it is possible for the most part to recover their original line (Fig. 2). Beginning at the northern cliff, where no walls were apparently deemed necessary, the defense wall encircles the rest of the site like a horseshoe. Its length measures approximately 520 meters, and it displays seven semicircular towers (Pl. 19:b), although a few more towers may have originally existed along the circuit’s eastern side where broken-down gaps occur in the outer wall.<sup>19</sup> There is no preserved evidence for a gate, a sign, perhaps, that the fortification was deliberately dismantled and not merely abandoned. The wall itself is constructed in two faces of rough polygonal masonry (Pl. 19:c) and originally served as the socle for a mud-brick superstructure.<sup>20</sup> Numerous roof-tile fragments along the circuit’s length

<sup>16</sup> K. A. Rhomaïos, «Ἀνὰ τὴν Ἀκαρνανίαν», Δελτ 4, 1918 [1921] (pp. 105–124), pp. 111–112.

<sup>17</sup> Since Rhomaïos gives no reason for his identification, it is difficult to divine what led him to make this choice. Our knowledge of this community comes from the following passage of Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnika* (Ἀθήναι): . . . ἐβδόμη Ἀκαρνανίας, ὡς Δημήτριος, Ἀθηναίους ἐν τῇ Κουρήτιδι κτίσαντας πόλιν Ἀθήνας προσαγορεύσαι. τὴν γὰρ νῦν Ἀκαρνανίαν Κουρήτιν ὠνόμαζον. “The seventh [city called Athenai] is in Akarnania according to Demetrios: ‘Athenians settling in Kouretis called their city Athenai.’ You see, what is now Akarnania used to be called Kouretis.” Perhaps Rhomaïos had been influenced by Oberhummer (*op. cit.* [footnote 14 above], p. 34), who believed Athenai was founded in southern Akarnania (i.e., Κουρήτις) at the time of Perikles’ attack on Oiniadai (in 453 B.C.). If so, he ignores the observation of Thucydides (II.102.5) that the Echinades Islands were uninhabited (ἐρημοί). We simply do not know enough about Athenai to identify it with the site on Skoupas. I am surprised, therefore, that F. Noack seems to have embraced this identification; cf. the citation of Noack’s 1906 unpublished manuscript in Kirsten, *op. cit.* (footnote 8 above), col. 2209.

<sup>18</sup> During the sailing season (March to November), the prevailing winds affecting this coast blow from the southern and western quadrants (i.e., from the southeast, south, southwest, west, and northwest); cf. *CSWA*, pp. 369–425 for a full discussion of the winds of this coast, the likelihood of the same conditions prevailing in antiquity, and for full references to the pertinent meteorological data. The harbor offers protection from winds from all directions except easterlies and northeasterlies.

<sup>19</sup> This makes the actual circuit about one-third the length and with one more tower than reported by Rhomaïos, *op. cit.* (footnote 16 above).

<sup>20</sup> The thickness of the circuit varies considerably. North of tower 1 it measures 2.6 m.; between towers 3 and 4, 1.4–1.45 m.; between 4 and 5, 1.6 m.; between 5 and 6, 1.4 m.; between 6 and 7, 1.3–1.35 m.; and east of 7, 2.6–3.45 m.

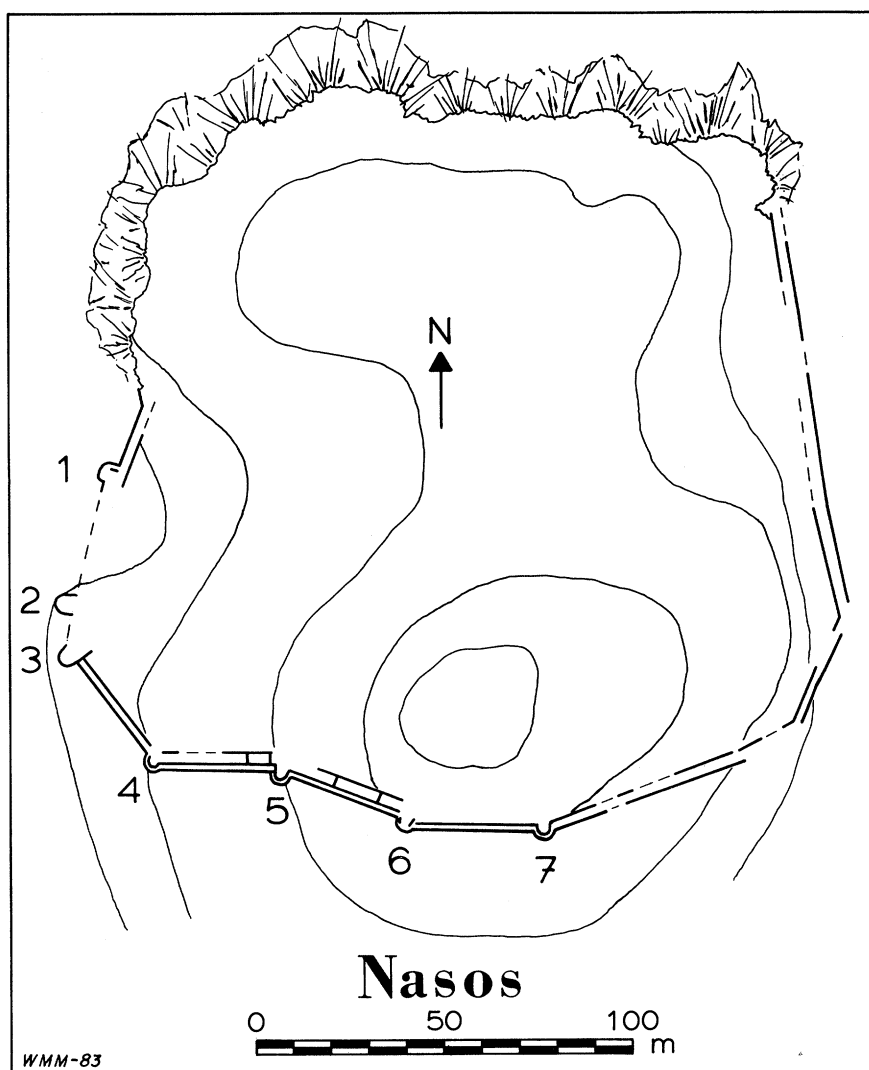


FIG. 2. Plan of Nasos

support this conclusion. The third wall observable between towers 4 and 6 may represent the original thickness here (4.5–4.8 m.), appropriate at a place where the terrain allows an easy approach;<sup>21</sup> it might also be the front wall of rooms (note the cross walls) built against the inner face of the circuit. Whatever one's conclusion, this additional wall should be seen as some attempt by the builders to strengthen the defenses at a particularly vulnerable place.

Unfortunately no diagnostic pottery was found while surveying the site which would help us with its date. Something might be gained, however, by comparing Portes with other

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps what originally existed was a mud-brick wall built on a double-faced socle and backed by an earthen podium set on its own low socle.

sites recorded along this coast. The closest parallel in plan and function is found near by at Agios Pandeileimona (Fig. 1:a), a protected harbor in the southern entrance of Astakos Bay. This fortification, called Kastro, crowns a conical hill beside the harbor, is circular in plan with a double-faced wall about 360 meters in length, and displays six semicircular towers of approximately the same size as the ones at Portes.<sup>22</sup> Its towers, which are carefully bonded to the circuit, and its handsome, coursed trapezoidal masonry should place its construction during a period of prosperity. Such a period occurs in Akarnania from the mid-4th to 2nd centuries B.C.<sup>23</sup> Since the community for which the Kastro was built is outside the walls and since the Kastro lacks a cistern, it was obviously not designed to withstand a long siege. It would seem to have been built to serve as a defense against attacks of short duration, such as pirate raids. Such conditions existed along this coast during the latter half of the 3rd century.<sup>24</sup>

The construction techniques evidenced at Portes are paralleled in many fortifications along Akarnania's western coast. Mud-brick defense walls atop a stone socle are utilized in two of the four city circuits along this coast, Astakos and Alyzeia. The use of rough polygonal masonry is common in Akarnanian fortifications, particularly when speed of construction and economy were important factors. That this style was used for a wall socle is not surprising; a polygonal socle is also found traversing similar terrain in the western city wall at Alyzeia.<sup>25</sup>

Although these comparisons are not conclusive in providing a date for Portes, they are consistent with the possibility that Portes was constructed sometime during the 4th to 2nd centuries B.C. The possibility is particularly strengthened by the close parallel in plan at Agios Pandeileimona. Such a conclusion is also supported by the nature of the signal tower Elleniko built on a small rise next to the harbor (Figs. 1:d, 3, Pl. 20:a-c).

The tower is roughly seven meters square and is set atop a rectangular terrace,

<sup>22</sup> Presumably Rhomaïos, who remarks on the rarity of the semicircular towers at Portes, never visited this site at Agios Pandeileimona; cf. Rhomaïos, *op. cit.* (footnote 16 above), p. 112.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *CSWA*, pp. 464-483 for the evidence concerning Akarnanian prosperity in the mid-4th, 3rd, and 2nd centuries B.C. For a full description of the remains at Agios Pandeileimona, see *CSWA*, pp. 55-65; and for the dangers inherent in using masonry styles as the sole criterion for dating Akarnanian fortifications, see *CSWA*, pp. 444-459.

<sup>24</sup> In the late 230's, Epeiros was terrorized by Illyrian pirates. Fear and apprehension led the Akarnanian League to sign a treaty of alliance with Queen Teuta, no doubt to safeguard against becoming the victims of such raids (cf. Polybios, II.6). We are told that ten years later the Aitolians were pillaging Epeiros and making raids from the sea on the Peloponnesos (at Pylos; cf. Polybios, IV.25.3-4); we are told that in 218 they had been using Kephallenian ships to cross to the Peloponnesos and to plunder the coasts of Epeiros and Akarnania (Polybios, V.3.7). One year later, the Illyrian chieftain Skerdilaidas made a raid on Leukas and seized four Macedonian ships, ostensibly to recover a debt owed him (Polybios, V.95.1-4). These years were anything but peaceful for coastal peoples and provide a plausible setting for the construction of such a fort. If Astakos (the major *polis* near by) was controlled by Aitolia during this period (as seems certain), the Kastro at Agios Pandeileimona may have been built at this time to withstand Illyrian pirate raids. Pottery finds from another Akarnanian coastal fortress in the Plagia Peninsula (called Katri Lithies) indicate that it was being used during these anxious years; cf. *CSWA*, pp. 192-195.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of these sites, see *CSWA*, pp. 67-73 and 106-113; for the evidence concerning the uses of different masonry styles, see pp. 444-459; and for the location of the polygonal socle at Alyzeia, see p. 107, fig. 14 (clear examples of polygonal masonry in the socle occur from tower 5 northward).

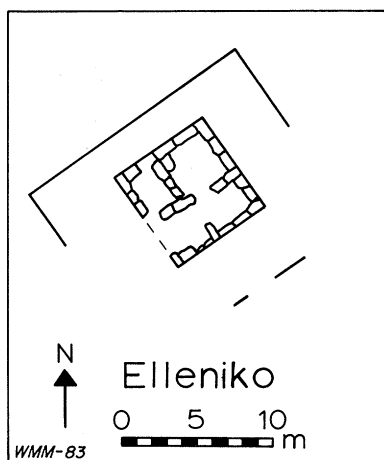


FIG. 3. Plan of Elleniko

supported by a retaining wall of coursed trapezoidal blocks.<sup>26</sup> Coursed trapezoidal masonry is also exhibited in the tower which is preserved to a height of four courses. It has a solid base to at least the level of the second course, no clamps or cuttings are visible on any of the blocks, and its north and west corners exhibit drafting. Although today the tower's interior is divided into four chambers of unequal size, it is impossible to determine whether this was indeed the original plan.

No diagnostic pottery to help with the date was found here either. Such towers are quite common in Akarnania, where they were built throughout antiquity to serve as

garrison posts and signal stations. Drafted corners, however, were a particular feature of Akarnanian fortifications from the 4th to 2nd centuries B.C.<sup>27</sup> The bulk of our available evidence, therefore, implies a general date for Portes and Elleniko which is compatible with the historical reference to Nasos.

It can also be demonstrated that Skoupas was probably still an island during the years when Nasos was captured. Our evidence for the rate of alluviation in the Acheloös delta comes from numerous authors who were intrigued by the process. Herodotos (II.10.3), our earliest source, says that one half of the Echinades Islands had already been joined to the mainland. Thucydides (II.102.3) adds the observation that it would not take much more time before the remaining islands were also joined to the mainland. The *periplus* bearing the name of Skylax informs us that the process was still continuing during the 4th century.<sup>28</sup> For the nature of this area in the 3rd and 2nd centuries, important evidence is preserved by Stephanus of Byzantium in his work entitled *Ethnika*. His entry on "Artemita" runs as follows: "... Artemidoros says that a peninsula near the mouth of the Acheloös is called

<sup>26</sup> The tower measures 7.05 (northwest and southeast faces) by 7.2 m. The terrace measures 16.6 by 13.5 m.

<sup>27</sup> Although a few examples of drafting may date to the 5th century, the overwhelming number of *dated* examples come from the 4th and 3rd centuries. For the evidence, see CSWA, p. 456 with note 19. Most large-scale building projects had ceased in Akarnania by the end of the 2nd century B.C., thus providing a rough *terminus ante quem* for the construction of such a tower. Akarnania virtually ceased to exist as a political entity when Octavian founded Nikopolis in 30 B.C. For a discussion of these depressed years, see CSWA, pp. 360–368.

<sup>28</sup> Pseudo-Skylax, 34. The *periplus* attributed to Skylax of Karyanda (fl. last quarter of the 6th century B.C.; cf. Herodotos, IV.44) includes references to events during the mid-4th century. The traditional opinion that it was compiled during this century (cf. C. Miller, *geographi graeci minores* I, Paris 1855, pp. XLIII–XLV and also G. F. Unger, "Die Abfassungszeit des sogenannten Skylax," *Philologus* 33, 1874, pp. 29–45) has recently been questioned by A. Peretti (*Il periplo di Scilace*, Pisa 1979), who maintains that most of the *periplus* is indeed derived from a 6th-century source written by Skylax. For reasons too detailed to enumerate here, I still favor a mid-4th-century date of composition for the section dealing with Akarnania.



Artemita . . . There is an island Artemita next to the Oxeiai islands. Rhianos in the eighth book of his *Thessalika* says, 'I went to the islands Oxeiai and Artemita.'<sup>29</sup> If Artemita is part of the Echinades group as Strabo (1.3.18) says, but separate from the Oxeiai group, it could be either modern Petalas, Chounovina, or even Skoupas (Fig 1:c).<sup>30</sup> Since Petalas is still an island, Artemita must be either Chounovina or Skoupas. It is difficult, however, to choose between the two alternatives. The plural form "Oxeiai" implies more than one island, but how many more? If Skoupas was part of this group, then Chounovina should be identified with Artemita. But if not, Skoupas is to be preferred because of its position "next to" (πλησίον) the other islands of the Oxeiai group and because of the ancient site located on it. The fate of this community as the island became progressively attached to the mainland would explain the attention paid to Artemita (as compared with other islands, like Chounovina, suffering a similar fate) by ancient geographers such as Artemidoros, Strabo, and Pliny the Elder.<sup>31</sup>

The definite resolution of this matter is unnecessary for our present purpose, since both hills occupy approximately the same position in relation to the mouth of the Acheloös River and would have experienced the same fate at roughly the same time. Although the evidence is not conclusive, the general impression is clear. During the 3rd century, the edge of the delta pushed westward toward Chounovina and Skoupas and by the end of the 2nd century finally joined them to the mainland.<sup>32</sup> There should be no objection, therefore, to believing that Skoupas was still an island during the late 3rd century.

A summary of the above points is now in order. The physical remains of the fortifications at Portes and Elleniko are consistent with others along Akarnania's western coast dating from the 4th to 2nd century B.C. In fact, where these fortifications can be dated by evidence independent of historical arguments (such as pottery or inscribed reliefs) they group into the 4th and 3rd centuries.<sup>33</sup> In addition, it seems that the hill occupied by Portes and Elleniko was still an island in the late 3rd century. The strong likelihood exists, therefore, that Portes and Elleniko were situated on an offshore island near the mouth of the Acheloös River when Laevinus sailed toward Oiniadai in 211 B.C. If one were to invent a candidate for Nasos, he could do no better than this site on Skoupas.

<sup>29</sup> Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnika* (Ἀρτεμίτα): . . . ὁ δὲ Ἀρτεμίδωρος φησιν ὅτι χερρόνησος περὶ τὴν ἐκβολὴν τοῦ Ἀχελφου ποταμοῦ λεγομένη Ἀρτεμίτα. . . ἔστι καὶ πλησίον τῶν Ὀξειῶν νήσων νήσος Ἀρτεμίτα. Ῥιανὸς ἢ θεσσαλικῶν «νήσοις Ὀξειήσι καὶ Ἀρτεμίτῃ ἐπέβαλλον». Artemidoros' floruit was in the late 2nd century, that of Rhianos during the second half of the 3rd century.

<sup>30</sup> For the locations of the Echinades and Oxeiai Islands (which form a part of the Echinades group), cf. Strabo, x.2.19 and Oberhummer, *op. cit.* (footnote 14 above), pp. 21–23.

<sup>31</sup> Artemidoros as quoted by Stephanus of Byzantium (footnote 29 above); Strabo, 1.3.18; and Pliny, *HN*, 4.5. The ethnic forms quoted by Stephanus (τὸ ἐθνικὸν Ἀρτεμιτηνός. Ἀπολλόδορος δ' Ἀρταμιτηνός φησι διὰ τοῦ ᾱ.) may imply that people inhabited the island (there were other places called Artemita, however). If so, this would definitely favor the identification of Skoupas with Artemita, since no community of any kind has yet been located on Chounovina.

<sup>32</sup> That Artemita was linked to the delta toward the end of the 2nd century is implied by Strabo (1.3.18), who refers to this fact as if it were a fairly recent event.

<sup>33</sup> Out of eighteen sites, six can be dated by pottery (but note, pottery merely attests a period of use, not an original construction date), inscribed reliefs, or a direct literary reference to their construction. All examples were built before the 2nd century; cf. *CSWA*, pp. 449–453.

## HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS

If we accept this identification as likely, what are the implications for the history of this area? Situated on Skoupas, Nasos was of prime importance for anyone wishing to control the city of Oiniadai.<sup>34</sup> From Nasos one could insure or deny free access to the city from the sea. The military implications of this were no doubt appreciated by Laevinus. Commercially, the site was also of prime importance. The bay at Nasos would serve as an excellent overnight anchorage for coastal traders on their way to and from Italy and northwest Greece. And for those not wishing to risk the sail upriver to Oiniadai, it offered a good place to take on and discharge cargo and passengers. These could then have been ferried to and from Oiniadai in shallow-draft river boats.<sup>35</sup>

When Nasos was originally built is impossible to determine conclusively from our present information.<sup>36</sup> A plausible argument, however, can be advanced for its construction after the Aitolio-Akarnanian treaty of *ca.* 262 mentioned above. In this treaty, the border between the two *ethne* is clearly defined as “. . . the Acheloös River, down to the sea; territory to the east of the Acheloös River is Aitolian, and territory to the west is Akarnanian, except for that of Pras and Demphis.”<sup>37</sup> Not a word is said about Nasos, which is situated in an ambiguous position off the mouth of the Acheloös River. Had this community existed, I believe it should have been defined as belonging to one of the two parties.

As the process of alluviation made the approach to Oiniadai more difficult for merchant ships, the need for an alternate depot like Nasos increased. If this scenario is correct, it was probably constructed by the Aitolians between *ca.* 252 and 219 when they controlled the city of Oiniadai. In 219, when Philip arrived at the latter city, he met with little resistance; the fortifications were in disrepair and no townspeople are mentioned. A garrison of Aitolians contemplated resistance from the acropolis before eventually deciding to flee (Polybios, iv.65.4 and 8). This lack of townspeople and apparent neglect of Oiniadai's defenses would

<sup>34</sup> Throughout the following discussion, I will use the name Nasos to refer to the Portes/Elleniko site on Skoupas.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. the following remarks made by William Mure (*Journal of a Tour in Greece and the Ionian Islands* I, London 1842, p. 85) concerning his journey from Ithaka to Oiniadai in the 1840's:

At daybreak the next morning (February 28th), on issuing from the hold, in which I had passed the night, I found we were lying at anchor, apparently about a mile distant from the nearest point of the mainland, under one of the numerous small desert isles that here line the coast of Acarnania, a portion of the group of Echinades. The mariners were preparing a little nutshell of a flat-bottomed boat for taking us on shore, into which we descended with the luggage. . . . On enquiring why it was necessary to quit our vessel at so great a distance from port, I was told that she could neither float over the mud banks, nor make head against the current, which set strong from the land side between them.

<sup>36</sup> It is clear from Thucydides, ii.102.5 that Nasos can not antedate the Peloponnesian War; cf. footnote 17 above. One might also be tempted to conclude from Pseudo-Skylax, 34 (εἰσι δ' ἔρημοι [*sc.* the Echinades]) that Nasos should not antedate the mid-4th century. Considering the nature of the source, however, this latter statement must remain inconclusive; cf. footnote 28 above.

<sup>37</sup> IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 3A, lines 5–7: . . . ὅρια ἔχοντας τὰς χώρας τὸν Ἀχελῷον ποταμὸν | ὃν ἄχρι εἰς θάλασσαν. τὰ μὲν ποτ' ἂν τοῦ Ἀχελῷου ποταμοῦ Αἰτωλῶν εἴμεν, τὰ δὲ | ποθ' ἐσπέραν Ἀκαρνάνων πλὴν τοῦ Πραντὸς καὶ τὰς Δεμφίδος. The locations of both Pras and Demphis are unknown, although Pras is presumably close enough to Stratos and the territory of the Agraioi to be of concern to both peoples (cf. lines 8–11).

be less surprising if the Aitolians had constructed an offshore trading depot.<sup>38</sup> It would also explain the subsequent interest Aitolia showed in controlling the Echinades Islands (see below).

A case might also be made for the construction of Nasos by Philip to offer protection to the naval base he was building at Oiniadai immediately after its capture. Had Philip personally undertaken this task, however, we should have expected Polybios to record it. Since the historian fails to record certain events not involving Philip (the Akarnanian recovery of Alyzeia, Astakos, and Koronta in the period following Philip's campaign) the possibility exists that the Akarnanians fortified Nasos during this period.<sup>39</sup> Certainty is, of course, impossible, but I believe subsequent events favor an Aitolian rather than an Akarnanian construction of this site. We should expect Akarnanian capital and energy to have been expended on the communities that had recently been recovered, not on fortifying offshore islands. If such a position was already built, it would have been utilized, and so it was until the arrival of Laevinus and its return with Oiniadai to Aitolia.

In 206 the Aitolians, independently of Rome, agreed to make peace with Philip and his allies. We know little of the treaty's provisions, but it probably recognized the *status quo*.<sup>40</sup> If this is so, Oiniadai and Nasos remained under Aitolian control, a condition that prevailed until 189 when the Aitolians were forced to return "Oiniadai and its territory" to the Akarnanians (Polybios, XXI.32.14). Nothing is said of Nasos. Although one might expect it to have been part of Oiniadai's territory, this was apparently not the case. As we learn from Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 1.51.2), another provision of this treaty stipulated that the Echinades Islands were to be exploited by both the Akarnanians and Aitolians.<sup>41</sup>

The verb "to exploit" (*καρποῦσθαι*) has caused at least one scholar to doubt the authenticity of this passage.<sup>42</sup> Considering the historical background of this area, however, the verb's meaning is clear and the passage free from reproach. Since the Aitolians had constructed Nasos the lagoon surrounding Oiniadai's harbor had continued to silt up. By 189

<sup>38</sup> It might seem paradoxical that Aitolia was so concerned about controlling a city she chose not to inhabit. What apparently mattered most to Aitolia was control of the fertile floodplain of the Acheloös River, a condition more easily attained without a hostile Akarnanian population behind the walls of Oiniadai. On this interpretation, Aitolia's desire to control Oiniadai during these years would be motivated more by strategic concerns (i.e., her control of the Acheloös floodplain) than by any desire to populate the city with Aitolians. This matter, however, must not be over-simplified. Although Oiniadai (still under Aitolian control) was not included in a list of Aitolian cities on a decree of 207 (*IG IX* 1<sup>2</sup>, 186), it appears soon thereafter in a catalogue of *theorodokoi* at Delphi (cf. *IG IX* 1<sup>2</sup>, p. XXV, line 73 = A. Plassart, "La liste delphique des Théorodoques," *BCH* 45, 1921 (pp. 1–85), p. 23, col. IV, line 62; for the probable date, see pp. 39–41). Considering the incomplete record of our sources, very little can be said with absolute certainty.

<sup>39</sup> It is certain from *IG IX* 1<sup>2</sup>, 583, lines 6, 22, 64–65, that Koronta and Alyzeia were members of the Akarnanian League by ca. 216 B.C. The topographical setting of Astakos, hemmed in by Koronta, Oiniadai, and Alyzeia, makes it extremely likely that this *polis* was also recovered by 217.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. S. Oost, *Roman Policy in Epirus and Acarnania in the Age of the Roman Conquest of Greece*, Dallas 1954, pp. 35–36; and Oberhummer, *op. cit.* (footnote 14 above), p. 171.

<sup>41</sup> This fact lends support to the view that Aitolia was originally responsible for the construction of Nasos. It also tends to support my view that the status of Nasos would have been defined in the Aitolio-Akarnanian treaty of ca. 262 (*IG IX* 1<sup>2</sup>, 3A) had it already existed as a fortified community.

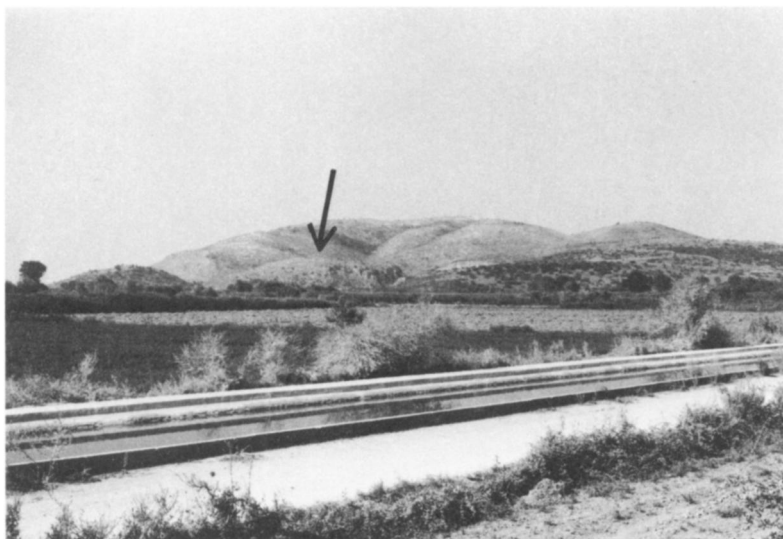
<sup>42</sup> Oost, *op. cit.* (footnote 40 above), p. 66 and note 172.

Nasos had become an important part of Oiniadai's territory: a port outside the shallows limiting access to Oiniadai's original harbor. The Romans, therefore, had a problem when they decided to return Oiniadai "and its territory" to the Akarnanians. Nasos was originally separate from this territory but was now too important to Oiniadai to leave in Aitolian hands. In order to remove a potential bone of contention that would surely result in border disputes and warfare, the Romans made the Echinades Islands the property of neither side. They probably emphasized their position by razing the walls at Nasos to the ground. Hereafter, both Aitolians and Akarnanians were "to reap profits from" the Echinades Islands.<sup>43</sup> If Nasos survived this change in status, it probably did not outlive its harbor which would have become useless during the course of the 2nd century. In the succeeding years, we hear no more about Nasos or about the Aitolo-Akarnanian border. It seems that the Roman fiat was observed and peace prevailed.

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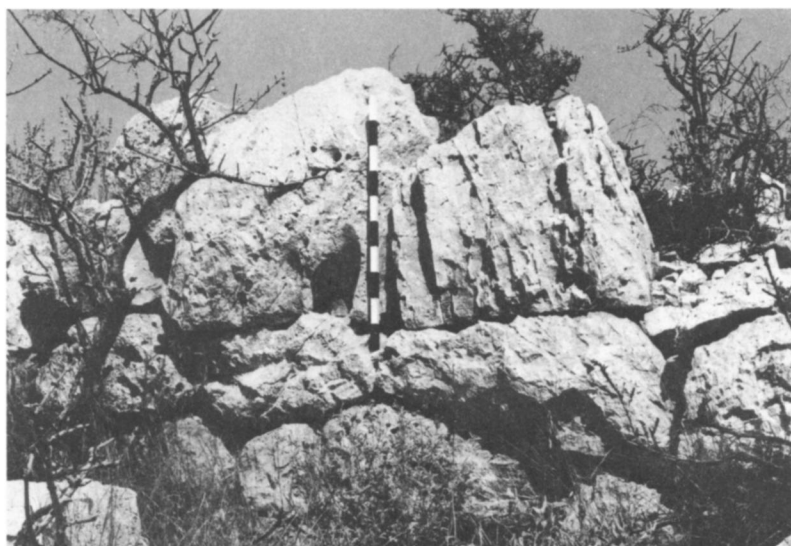
<sup>43</sup> This is surely what was meant by the verb *καρποῦσθαι*; cf. *LSJ*, *καρπύω* (II.2) where numerous examples are cited of this verb being used in similar contexts.



a. Skoupas from the northeast (arrow pointing at Portes)



b. Portes. Masonry at tower 5



c. Portes. Rough polygonal masonry east of tower 7

PLATE 20



a. Elleniko from Portes



b. Elleniko from the northwest



c. Elleniko from the southwest