

# HYMETTIANA III

## THE BOUNDARY MARKERS OF ALEPOVOUNI

The most prominent foothill of those that rise along the western side of Mount Hymettos between the monasteries of Kaisariani and Kareas is Alepovouni (Fig. 1). Archaeological attention has recently been drawn to this hill by the publication of five rupestral boundary markers found on it: *SEG* XXXI 148 and XXXV 139. In the present study these five and sixteen additional markers, fourteen of them cut into the bedrock of Alepovouni, are published, along with other antiquities on the hill that have come to my attention.<sup>1</sup>

### DESCRIPTION OF ALEPOVOUNI<sup>2</sup>

Alepovouni (Fig. 2) rises rather abruptly from the so-called Hymettos ramp at a distance of 4 km east and slightly south of the Athenian Acropolis and not quite 2 km west of Kaisariani monastery. Despite the abrupt outcropping, the slopes of the hill are only moderately steep, and the top is a blunted rather than a pointed summit. The survey marker at the highest point is 299.8 m above sea level and stands at 23°46'12.96" east longitude and 37°57'40.18" north latitude. From the west and south the hill appears

1. In earlier comments about the hill, I used its German name, Fuchsberg (Langdon 1985, pp. 257–260). Now that the Greek name has gained currency, I will henceforth use it exclusively. I have not been able to learn when and from whom the hill acquired its Greek name.

The inscriptions were found at various times between 1992 and 1994 by John Camp, Graham Oliver, Aleydis Van de Moortel, and the author. In the preparation of this study I have been greatly aided by their observations as well as those of others too numerous to mention. I have also benefited from the

helpful suggestions of two *Hesperia* referees. I am grateful to all these individuals, though none of them should be implicated in the discussion presented here.

I am indebted to the Royalty Research Fund of the University of Washington for a generous grant that made possible the production of the map, Figure 3. Mapping and surveying were undertaken with the permission of the Second Ephoreia of Antiquities of the Greek Archaeological Service and were carried out in 1996 by Hans Birk, using three Ashtech Dimension GPS

Receivers to plot the points and AutoCad and Rasterex programs to produce the map.

2. This description is based on what was preserved in 1997. A comparison of Curtius and Kaupert 1881–1891, sheet IV, showing contours of the hill in 1875, with Figure 3 reveals that many natural features have been lost to urban development. Photographic views of the area before urbanization may be found most readily in Travlos 1971, p. 168, fig. 218, and Papageorgiou-Venetas 1994, p. 47, fig. 61. In both views Alepovouni is directly above the stadium.

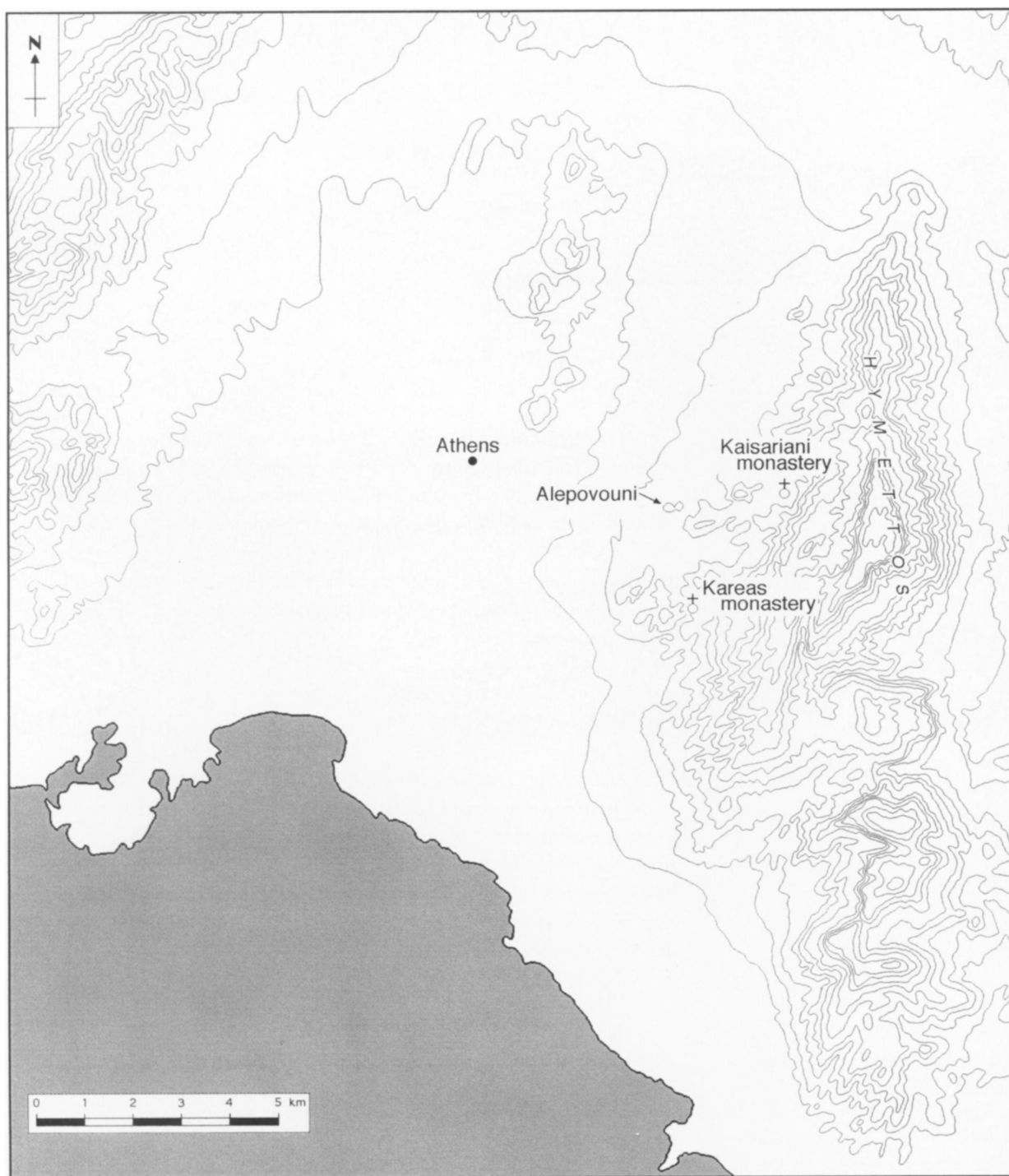


Figure 1. Mount Hymettos and the plain of Athens

cone-shaped and isolated. A northern or eastern vantage dissipates this impression by bringing into full view a prominent spur that extends north-eastward for 300 m at a level some 20 m below the summit. The spur serves to bring the hill close to the mountain, so that Alepovouni is customarily regarded as part of Hymettos. On the spur at least eight *horoi* were cut.



Figure 2. Alepovouni from the northwest

The other sides of Alepovouni are fairly regular. On the north the slope is moderate, on the south somewhat steeper and rockier. Two *horoi* have been discovered on the south side, none on the north. The western side is also of generally moderate slope. Its main features are a deep gully cutting in from the west and two knolls, at the northwest and southwest. *Horoi* have been found on both knolls and at numerous other points on this slope (Fig. 3).

## CATALOGUE

Note: for coordinates of the markers, see Appendix 2.

### 1 *Horos*

Cut on a rounded outcrop immediately north of the rise at eastern end of northeast spur; *SEG* XXXV 139. L.H. of omicrons 0.11; rho 0.13; sigma 0.12; length 0.59 m.

ΟΡΟΣ

North to south orientation, reader facing east.

### 2 *Horos*

Cut on a northward-facing vertical surface of rock on north slope of the spur, 220 m downhill from 1. L.H. of omicrons 0.15; rho 0.23; sigma 0.13; length 0.51 m.

ΟΡΟΣ

Bottom to top orientation, reader facing east.

Fig. 4

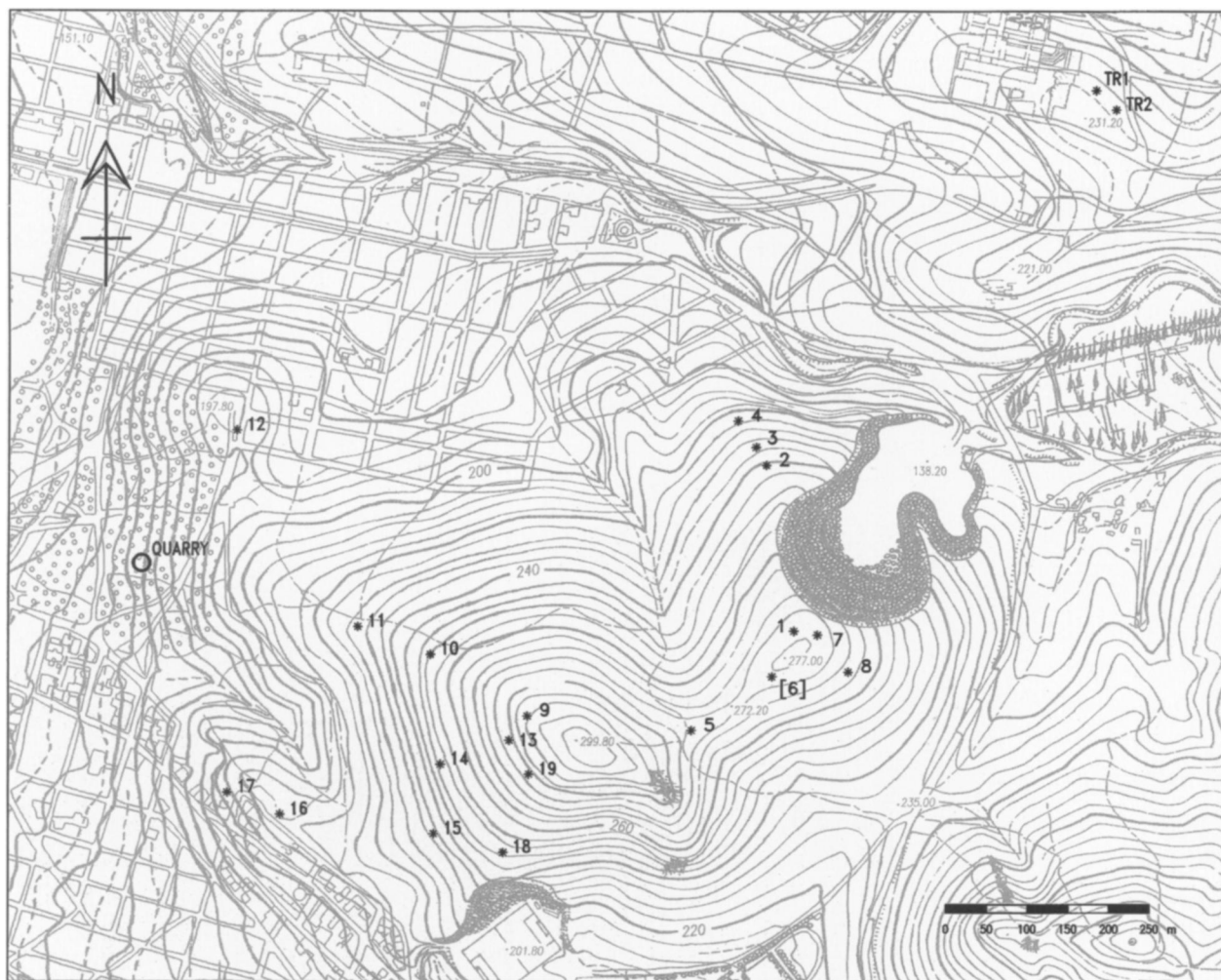


Figure 3. Alepovouni: map showing location of *horoi* and other antiquities. Contour interval: 4 m

### 3 *Horos*

On a slightly inclined, northward-facing rock, 25 m downhill from 2, I believe that I see traces that can be read as ΟΡΟΣ. It is not possible to record them on a photograph or even draw or measure them without doubt. Others to whom I have shown the rock in question agree that the traces are of letters of a boundary marker.

The putative marker reads from west to east for one facing south.

### 4 *Horos*

Cut on a sloping, northward-facing surface, 35 m downhill from 3. L.H. of omicrons 0.15; rho 0.17; sigma 0.14; length 0.69 m.

Fig. 5

### ΟΡΟΣ

Bottom to top orientation, reader facing east. Letters are certain but discernible only in strongly raking light.

### 5 *Horos*

Inscribed on a large, flat surface at western end of northeast spur; *SEG* XXXI 148. L.H. of initial omicron 0.34; rho 0.30; second omicron 0.31; sigma 0.26; length 1.10 m.

### ΟΡΟC

North to south orientation, reader facing east. It seems certain that this inscription was first mentioned in print by William Gell (1827) in the early 19th century.<sup>3</sup>

3. Stanton (1996, p. 361, note 131) convincingly makes the association between this *horos* and the account by Gell (1827).

6 *Horos*

Once on a small, flat surface near the slight rise at east end of northeast spur; *SEG XXXI* 148. L.H. 0.12–0.17; length 0.60 m.

OPOC

North to south orientation, reader facing east. The inscription has been destroyed by bulldozing activity since it was first published.

7 *Horos*

Cut on a small, flat surface at very east end of northeast spur as it begins sloping down to the east; *SEG XXXI* 148. L.H. of initial omicron

0.23; rho 0.26; second omicron 0.185–0.21; sigma 0.15; length 0.70 m.

OPOC

North to south orientation, reader facing east.

8 *Horos*

Cut on an inclined shelf, downhill from and 60 m southeast of 7; *SEG XXXI* 148. L.H. of initial omicron 0.215–0.235; rho 0.235; second omicron 0.20–0.24; sigma 0.19; length 0.80 m.

OPOC

East to west orientation, reader facing south.



Figure 4. *Horos* 2 (arrow indicates initial omicron)

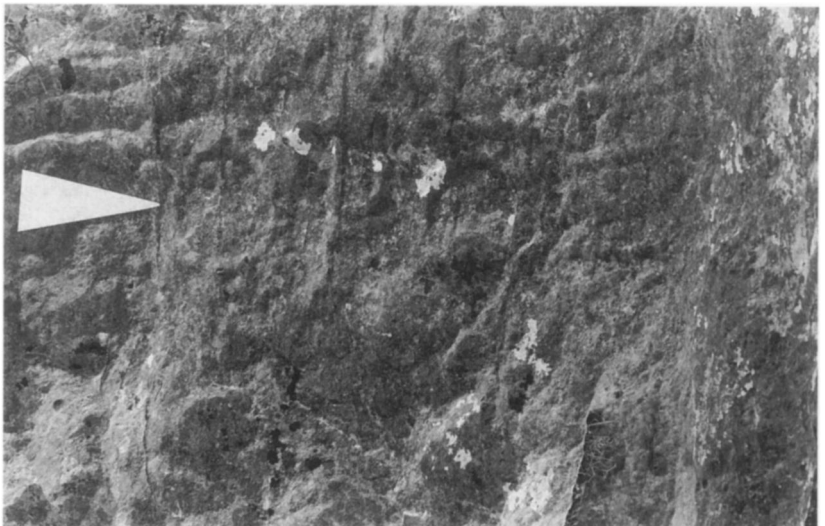


Figure 5. *Horos* 4 (arrow indicates initial omicron)

9 *Horos* Fig. 6

Cut on a slightly rounded shelf of rock high up west slope, 60 m northwest of columnar survey marker that marks the highest point of the hill. L.H. of initial omicron 0.145; rho 0.18; second omicron 0.14; sigma 0.15; length 0.665 m.

OPOC

North to south orientation, reader facing east.

10 *Horos* Fig. 7

Cut on a slanted surface of exposed rock that faces north, 130 m northwest of 9. L.H. of initial

omicron 0.11–0.12; rho 0.15; sigma 0.13; length 0.59 m.

OPOC

Northeast to southwest orientation, reader facing southeast.

11 *Horos* Fig. 8

Cut on a small, roughly frustum-shaped outcrop, 75 m northwest of 10. L.H. of initial omicron 0.11; rho 0.15; second omicron 0.12; length 0.36 m.

OPO[C--]

Northeast to southwest orientation, reader facing southeast. The second omicron is barely visible; after it the rock is broken away. The

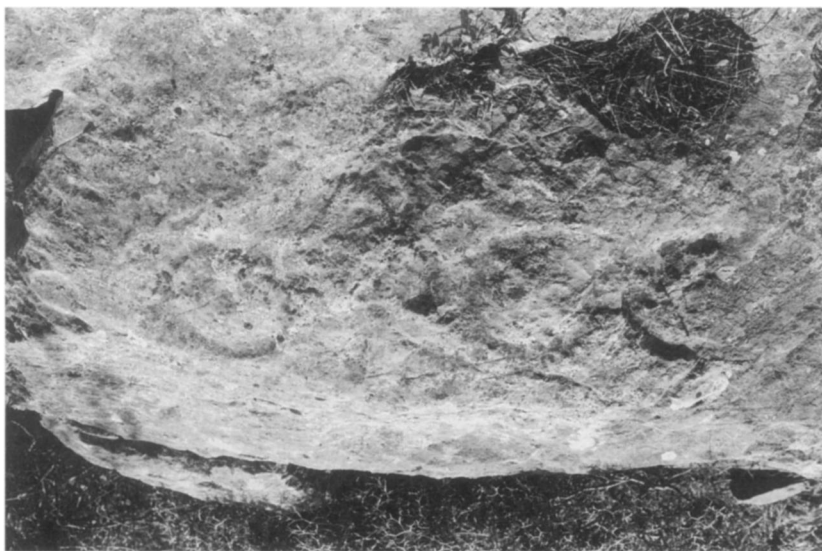


Figure 6. *Horos* 9



Figure 7. *Horos* 10



Figure 8. *Horos* 11Figure 9. *Horos* 12

preserved letters are more similar to the markers with preserved lunate sigmas than to those with four-stroke sigmas, hence my restoration of the lunate form here.

#### 12 *Horos*

Fig. 9

Cut on a southward-facing, inclined surface well down the slope, 280 m northwest of 11. The inscribed rock is located at the western edge of Sevastopoulou Street, 10 m north of its intersection with Dervenakion Street. L.H. of initial omicron 0.16; rho 0.25; second omicron 0.16; length 0.50 m.

OPO[C--]

Northwest to southeast orientation, reader facing northeast. Lunate sigma is restored for the same reason as in 11.

According to a local resident, Sevastopoulou Street was paved around 1970. Half of the second omicron and the sigma may have been lost at that time or earlier when rock was removed for laying out the earthen roads that preceded the paved streets. Drill holes for blasting charges may be seen in the rock scarp just north of the inscription. Cement fills part of the hasta and loop of the rho. Between 1994 and 1996 the inscription was defaced by gray spray paint.

Figure 10. *Horos* 13Figure 11. *Horos* 14**13 *Horos***

Fig. 10

Cut on a sloping surface facing southwest, two contour levels downhill from and 30 m southwest of 9. L.H. of initial omicron 0.09–0.10; rho 0.115; second omicron 0.075–0.08; sigma 0.105; length 0.385 m.

OPOC

Northeast to southwest orientation, reader facing southeast.

**14 *Horos***

Fig. 11

On a flat, inclined surface, 80 m southwest of 13. L.H. of initial omicron 0.105–0.135; rho 0.155;

second omicron 0.055–0.08; sigma 0.095; length 0.395 m.

OPOC

East to west orientation, reader facing south. The omicrons are the least circular of all those in the markers cut on the hill.

**15 *Horos***

Fig. 12

Cut on a flat surface on southwest slope, 75 m south of 14. L.H. of initial omicron 0.145; rho 0.17; second omicron 0.095; sigma 0.125; omicron above 0.10; mu below 0.14; length 0.46 m.



○  
OPOC  
✠

East to west orientation, reader facing south.

16 *Horos*

Fig. 13

Cut on the flat surface of a low, bare knoll, 175 m west of 15, opposite no. 58 Theotokopoulou Street. L.H. of initial omicron 0.11; rho 0.10; second omicron 0.12; sigma 0.12; omicron above 0.11; mu below 0.14; length 0.47 m.

○  
OPOC  
✠

Northeast to southwest orientation, reader facing south-southwest.

Downcutting for Theotokopoulou Street removed the southern part of the knoll but spared the inscription by 1 m. Apartment buildings occupy only the south side of the street.

17 *Horos*

Fig. 14

Cut on a flat, bare shelf of rock, slightly inclined, 70 m northwest of 16 and 12 m west of Argyroupoleos Street. L.H. of initial omicron 0.11; rho 0.12; second omicron 0.105; sigma 0.13; omicron above 0.105; mu below 0.17; length 0.45 m.



Figure 12. *Horos* 15

Figure 13. *Horos* 16



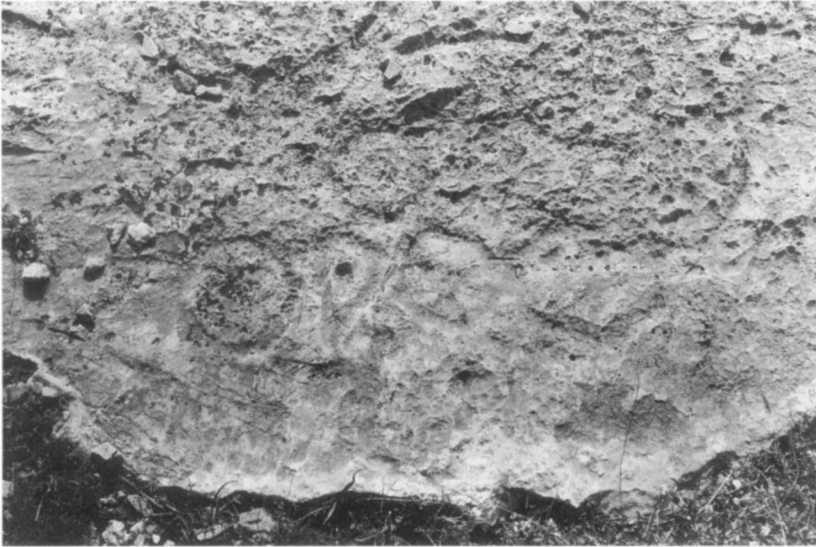


Figure 14. *Horos 17*



Figure 15. *Horos 18*



Figure 16. *Horos 19*

O  
OPOC  
↘↙

East to west orientation, reader facing south. Despite deformation of the sigma and mu due to severe weathering of the surface, all letters may be read clearly.

18 *Horos*

Fig. 15

Cut on a low, westward-inclined outcrop, 80 m east of 15. L.H. of initial omicron 0.12; rho 0.16; second omicron 0.075; sigma 0.105; zeta above 0.09; omicron below 0.09; length 0.45 m.

Ι  
OPOC  
O

North to south orientation, reader facing east. The inscription

just escapes being covered by an aluminum fence that runs along the upper edge of a quarry pit on the lower south slope of the hill.

19 *Horos*

Fig. 16

Cut on a low, southward-inclined outcrop, 100 m north and slightly east of 18. L.H. of initial omicron 0.145; rho 0.15; second omicron 0.10; sigma 0.165; zeta above 0.065; omicron below 0.08; length 0.49 m.

Ι  
OPOC  
O

North to south orientation, reader facing east. The rock is heavily scoured with water channels, but all letters are distinct.

How complete is the catalogue? Beginning in fairly recent times human activity has altered Alepovouni in numerous ways. Quarries, reforestation, road building, and all manner of construction and earthmoving have been responsible for the disappearance of much surface bedrock. It is virtually certain that these depredations have led to the loss of an indeterminate number of *horoi*. Despite this, I also believe that the many hours that I and others have spent exploring the hill have not necessarily yielded all extant inscriptions. Several that were found are very badly weathered. Their discovery was due to someone being in the right place at just the right time when the natural light made them noticeable. Under less favorable lighting conditions, several of the markers are very difficult to see. It is quite possible that more are preserved and that future explorations may lead to their discovery.

## DATING

Although the possibility of learning when the boundary markers were inscribed through epigraphical or archaeological context is ruled out by their brevity and the absence of other datable remains, we can gain a good idea of their date, at least in broad terms, by paying close attention to letter forms and layout.

The layout of the text is very helpful in dating 15–19, the five markers with supplemental letters that label in greatly abbreviated form what lay on either side of the line. All other rupestrial boundary markers known to me that have a similar arrangement of letters above and below the word ὅρος can assuredly be dated to Roman times. The most famous are the inscriptions in the Taygetos mountain range that mark the boundary between Messenia and Lakonia.<sup>4</sup> There the scheme used was an omicron

4. *IG* V.1 1371a–b; *SEG* XIII 269, including new finds and a better visual presentation of those in the corpus.

encircling a rho to express the boundary word. A single mu was then added to one side of the mark and a single lambda to the other. A decree of the Early Imperial era, *IG V.1* 1431, authorizes the establishment of this boundary and allows the markers to be dated to the 1st century A.C. Closer to Alepovouni is another good Roman parallel. At the southern end of Mount Hymettos are three rupestral boundary markers, two of which are flanked above and below by the problematic truncations **ZΩ** and **BA**.<sup>5</sup> All the letters are cut in a distinctive angular style that was used in Hadrianic and Antonine times. Other rupestral boundary markers, while not offering such close parallels, show that the layout of texts to reflect the physical and legal realities of ownership was a distinctively Roman trait. These include inscriptions whose parts are placed at right angles to each other<sup>6</sup> and opisthographic stones.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, the texts of earlier boundary inscriptions in Greek lands are not laid out with these same preoccupations in mind. When bounded entities are inscribed together with the word *horos* in pre-Roman times, the labels are simply placed after the word.<sup>8</sup>

In this same group of markers, the extra letters themselves provide some information on date. The zetas of **18** and **19**, in form resembling upended etas, do little besides possibly ruling out a Late Hellenistic date, when the zigzag form was vastly more popular. The distinctively shaped mus of **15–17**, on the other hand, point specifically to Roman times. The letter's most noticeable feature is the hyperextension of both the upright and diagonal letter strokes beyond their point of intersection (Fig. 17). In Attica this feature first appears in the 1st century B.C., when alpha and delta begin to exhibit it. In the Imperial period lambda and mu join in.<sup>9</sup> Mu with extended strokes is documented in Attica from the beginning of the Imperial era until around A.D. 210. The mus of the three Alepovouni *horoi* clearly partake in the overlap style, although they are unparalleled in the great length of the hasta extensions, amounting to 9.5 cm in **15** and 8.0 cm in **16**. Nevertheless, we may securely assign these mus, and therefore *horoi* **15–17**, to the Roman period.<sup>10</sup>

The most important letter for purposes of dating the remaining inscriptions is sigma. The *horoi* with four-bar sigmas may be regarded as the earlier series. The absence of initial heta insures that they were not inscribed prior to the 4th century, for it is never omitted as a letter form in boundary markers of the 6th and 5th centuries. The sigmas also conform to an upper chronological limit of ca. 400 B.C. The practice of cutting sigmas with four strokes had begun decades earlier, but after the 5th century the letter becomes more compact, as the top and bottom bars lose their wide flare and approach parallel courses.<sup>11</sup> Although there are risks involved in comparing the letter forms of inscribed state documents, dedications, and gravestones with those of less formal inscriptions like the ones under study here, the dissimilarity between the compact sigmas of **1–4** and the flaring sigmas of inscriptions of the 5th century is great enough to preclude a date for our boundary markers before the beginning of the 4th century.

Sigma is also crucial in establishing the lower time limit for **1–4**. During the course of the 1st century B.C. the quadratic form became dominant, so that by the beginning of the Roman era, sigmas whose top and

5. *SEG XXXVIII* 169. In my publication of these inscriptions (Langdon 1988a), I suggested that the truncations stood for *Zosterioi* and *basilikos*, "royal," the latter term to be understood with an unexpressed word for land, indicating a royal estate. I was unaware at the time that a similar interpretation had been given to two other rupestral *horoi*, one near Ephesos with beta-alpha: Merkelbach et al. 1981, p. 260, no. 3432; the other near Smyrna with just beta: Petzl 1987, p. 309, no. 831.

6. E.g., *SEG XXXIII* 173; Börker and Merkelbach 1979, p. 235, no. 566.

7. See *SEG XLI* 1412 for some examples in Greek. Opisthographic *termini* in Latin include *CIL VIII* 7084, 7089, 8211, 19104, 19133, and 19134 from Numidia; *CIL X* 7930 from Sardinia; and *CIL XII* 531b, h, i from Gallia Narbonensis. *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 5185, comprising the inscriptions on the two sides of Hadrian's Arch in Athens, is related to this phenomenon.

8. *IG VII* 2792, on the border of Akraiphia with Kopai, is the best rupestral illustration; it is of Early Hellenistic date.

9. Larfeld (1902, pp. 483–501) cites mu with extended hastas in his periods 15–17, approximately 30 B.C.–A.D. 210.

10. Some Hellenistic letter-cutters also overlapped the strokes of mu, but rather when they did, it was the diagonal rather than the vertical strokes that were extended. See, e.g., Tracy 1970, pl. 27.

11. For the forms of sigma in 5th-century Attic inscriptions, see Walbank 1974, esp. pp. 165–167. The best opportunity for gaining an idea of the shapes assumed by sigma in documents of 4th-century and later date is offered by the plates in Kirchner and Klaffenbach 1948, pls. 20ff. Four-bar sigma's evolution in graffiti and dipinti on vases followed a different course, morphologically and chronologically: see Immerwahr 1990, p. 159, comment on sigma (4) to (6).

Figure 17. Mu of *horos* 15

bottom strokes flared at all were quite rare. The four-bar sigmas in 1–4, while sharing nothing in shape with their Archaic and Early Classical forebears, have still not taken on the block form that would allow us to date them much after the end of the 2nd century.<sup>12</sup>

In my previous publication of 1, the 4th century was stated as the most likely date for the inscription.<sup>13</sup> The above analysis of its sigma and those of its companions shows that this is too narrow a range and that the greater part of the Hellenistic period must also be allowed. In sum, the three centuries between 400 and 100 B.C. may be taken as the limits within which 1–4 were cut. With so little else to go on epigraphically, it is impossible to narrow these limits further.

The sigmas of the other *horoi* on Alepovouni are lunate. Among Attic inscriptions on stone this form of the letter first occurs in the late 4th century but then quickly disappears. It reappears during the 1st century and, with other cursive forms, comes into increasingly common use in Roman times.<sup>14</sup> With this history of the letter in mind, Josiah Ober dated 5–8 to Roman times without further discussion.<sup>15</sup> Yet in subsequent consideration of them, commentators have favored an earlier date by stressing that lunate sigma does occur in five Attic *horoi* of indubitable Hellenistic date.<sup>16</sup> Such a small number does not constitute a very compelling data set. Without the evidence of other features, such as a datable epigraphical or archaeological context, we should let the statistics be our guide. Thus, single-word *horoi* employing lunate sigma should generally be dated to the Roman era. Ober was correct in his assignment of 5–8 to the Roman era, in my opinion, and 9–14 should be similarly dated. *Horoi* 15–19, which also have lunate sigma, are datable to Roman times by other means, as we have seen.

Chronological analysis of the remaining letters is not helpful. Neither the numerous omicrons nor the rhos exhibit any distinctive traits that permit assignment of them to specific periods.

12. See Larfeld 1902, pp. 481, 484.

There is no more recent survey of letter forms in Late Classical, Hellenistic, or Roman inscriptions from Attica. My impression is that an up-to-date study would not greatly alter Larfeld's evaluation of this particular letter.

13. Langdon 1985, pp. 257–260.

14. The history of lunate sigma in Attic inscriptions may be followed in Larfeld's discussion of periods 10 through 18. Lunate sigma in Attic graffiti and dipinti on clay and other media follows a different chronological history: see Johnston 1985, p. 297, note 4; also, the examples cited in Miller 1994, p. 97, notes 17–18.

15. Ober 1981, pp. 73–77.

16. The number is actually four: two security *horoi* (IG II<sup>2</sup> 2677 and 2759), a funerary *horos* (IG II<sup>2</sup> 2565), and the so-called *peripatos* inscription (IG II<sup>2</sup> 2639). A third security *horos*, IG II<sup>2</sup> 2758, continues to be included in this list, although it has long since been shown that no lunate sigma appears on this stone: Dow and Travis 1943, p. 163. I have examined the stone in the Epigraphical Museum and can confirm that all the sigmas on it are four-barred.

## FUNCTION

The marking of boundary lines with the simple word ὅρος in Attica was not confined to Alepovouni or even the western side of Mount Hymettos. At a number of other places, markers of similar brevity were cut on the native rock. These latter have been studied by a number of scholars, and a consensus has developed among them that the boundaries so marked were territorial dividing lines between adjacent demes.<sup>17</sup> The most economical hypothesis would hold that the *horoi* on Alepovouni performed the same function. Yet Alepovouni stands apart from other sites in the greater number of markers and separate boundary lines drawn on its slopes. In what follows, alternative possibilities for the purpose of the hill's boundary lines are considered.

### *HOROI 1-4*

Of these Late Classical or Hellenistic markers, 1, 2, and 4 plot a boundary line that extends roughly north and south on the northeast slope of the hill (Fig. 3). They share the same orientation, running parallel to the line they define and reading from left to right or bottom to top for a person facing east. The line is preserved for about 280 m, but how much further it extended or what turns it made are unknown. What does seem ruled out is a turning of the boundary westward from 1, along the top of the northeast spur. It is unlikely that all traces of an earlier group of inscriptions would have perished or eluded detection while 5-8 survive in the very same place. Instead, the line must have continued southward from 1 or returned to the east. There is plenty of exposed bedrock in both directions, but so far no *horoi* akin to 1-4 have turned up in those areas.

What is most striking about *horoi* 1-4 is the unsuitable quality of the rock chosen for their placement. Unlike those responsible for most of the other *horoi* on the hill, the cutters of 1-4 did not select flat surfaces, although such abound. They instead inscribed these *horoi* among all manner of bedrock. The rock with 1 is irregularly curved. A vertical outcrop contains 2. *Horos* 3 is on a small piece of rock that hardly breaks through the soil cover. *Horos* 4 is on a very irregular, sloping piece of rock. The apparent informality in the selection of surfaces on which to cut these *horoi* suggests private rather than public concerns. We are probably not dealing with a boundary between two demes or other corporate organizations, whether sacred or profane. More likely, one or more private landowners are responsible for these markers. The absence of ancient remains discourages any thoughts that the boundaries separated domestic or industrial sites. Likewise, the absence of terrace walls argues against standard agricultural activity, so that farmsteads must also be ruled out. Unless evidence for some other kind of land use has disappeared completely, a reason for concern about a boundary on Alepovouni should be sought in the hill's natural vegetational cover.

In addition to substantial amounts of exposed limestone bedrock, the surface of Alepovouni consists of a varied ground cover. A burgeoning forest of Aleppo pine trees planted all over the hill in recent years is replac-

17. To the list of references in Traill 1986, p. 119 under no. 3, add Lohmann 1993, pp. 57-58 and Goette 1994, p. 128, the latter stressing the many other possibilities besides demes that could lead to the marking of boundaries.



ing the woods of the past. Another prominent ingredient of the cover, one not needing modern intervention for survival, is aromatic herbs. Thyme is especially common, which is not surprising in view of its widespread occurrence all over Mount Hymettos.<sup>18</sup> What distinguished Hymettian thyme in antiquity from thyme that grew in the rest of Greece was the high regard in which it was held. A fragment of the 4th-century comic poet Euboulos contains the phrase *θύμον τε τῶν Ὑμηττίων*, which is cited by Athenaios (*Deip.* 1.28d) as an example of a place-name labeling the best specimen of a product.<sup>19</sup> Theophrastos (*HP* 6.7.2; paraphrased by Pliny, *HN* 19.55) relates that Hymettian thyme was brought into Athens for cultivation. As the only crop on Mount Hymettos mentioned in ancient literary sources that does not require cultivation or constructions that are archaeologically detectable, it deserves consideration as a feature that prompted the marking of a boundary on Alepovouni. If private individuals owned land on the hill, their interest may have been in the commercial exploitation of the herbs growing naturally on its slopes, including lavender, savory, and sage, besides thyme.<sup>20</sup> The pine wood was an additional valued resource.

The cutting of *horoi* 1–4 may have been an action taken by two neighboring landowners to mark off the limits of their property in order to insure for each his own use of these resources growing on discrete, private parcels of land. Viewed in this way the markers served to define ownership rather than prohibit access. Trespassing would naturally have been a concern, especially as Alepovouni was an easy walk from the *astu* and other communities in the plain and an obvious destination for woodcutters and herb gatherers on foraging expeditions. But except insofar as the simple word “boundary” may contain some prohibitive force, the Alepovouni markers do not explicitly forbid access to transient harvesters. What owners could hope for was that after they had marked out their land, random foragers would respect private property and do their gathering on unposted land.<sup>21</sup>

Alepovouni was not the only part of Hymettos to experience the labeling of boundaries. In other places on the mountain and its foothills, where pine trees and herbs also grow in abundance, landowners had every reason to be equally concerned with defining their private spaces. Useful plants growing wild and for the taking in the vicinity of a large city but also amid privately owned plots could have led individuals to adopt similar measures and to label the limits of their land. Rock-cut *horoi*, mostly singletons, occur elsewhere on the western slope. While they are certainly not all contemporary, they share with their counterparts on Alepovouni locations in areas that are readily accessible from the plain but which are devoid, or nearly so, of archaeological remains. One explanation for them could be that they were cut as guidelines for telling neighbors and foragers where parcels of land were privately owned. Closest to Alepovouni are a pair of *horoi* on a low, flat ridge that rises to the north of the dry streambed running along the northern foot of our hill. They are the most northerly examples of the phenomenon yet found and are treated in Appendix 1.<sup>22</sup> In the other direction, about 3.5 km to the southeast, occur two unrelated *horoi*. The text of one, *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 2525, includes a personal name, presumably

18. Among botanists there are differing opinions on the variety of thyme that grew on Hymettos in antiquity: see Andrews 1958, esp. p. 154; Amigues 1993, pp. 130–132.

19. The same fragment is quoted by Pollux (6.67) in a passage listing thyme among seasonings (*ἡδύσματα*).

20. The fullest treatment of the flora of Hymettos known to me is Zerlenti 1968.

21. Stanton (1996, pp. 361–362) suggests that these *horoi* were intended to discourage shepherds and goatherds from grazing their flocks over certain territorial limits. I have previously expressed doubts over similar suggestions made about other *horoi* in Attica (Langdon 1988b, pp. 44–45), and I have nothing to add here. Stanton admits that his thoughts are more impressionistic than evidentially based.

22. I omit *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 2519, a now lost *horos* just under 2 km east of Alepovouni, because it is located at a possible sanctuary site and may be a boundary inscription belonging to it. The site is occupied by the ruins of two churches that are built largely of ancient marble blocks: see Orlandos 1933, pp. 163–164.

that of a landowner. The other, *SEG XXXV* 15, has no supplementary text. Likewise, a further 1.5 km away is the most southerly *horos* of Hymettos's western slope, *SEG XXXV* 17. It too is merely a single word. There is no possibility of contemporaneity among these various *horoi*. The sketch of *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 2525 shows it to have had letters in cursive Roman script, including lunate sigmas. The sigma of *SEG XXXV* 15 is not preserved, but a daseia is. Finally, the sigma in *SEG XXXV* 17 is damaged but clearly readable as four-stroked.

Although these *horoi* may have been cut at widely differing times, they were not necessarily cut for entirely different reasons. Until the massive deforestation of modern times the forests of Hymettos were a constant source of wood, and Hymettian thyme was popular from Classical times to the Roman era. It is possible that concerns about foragers prompted landowners of different time periods to mark the limits of their land and to adopt similar measures for discouraging the taking of produce from the plots they owned. It may be significant that the known *horoi* are all confined to the central part of the western slope of the mountain, the area most susceptible to visitations from the populous Athenian plain. No *horoi* have ever been reported from the northern or southern extremities of the mountain, nor on the entire eastern side. In these regions, where the population density was much lower in antiquity, the pressures on landowners that I have envisioned for the central western area would have been less severe. Owners in those areas would not have felt obliged to mark their land in the way that those closer to Athens did.

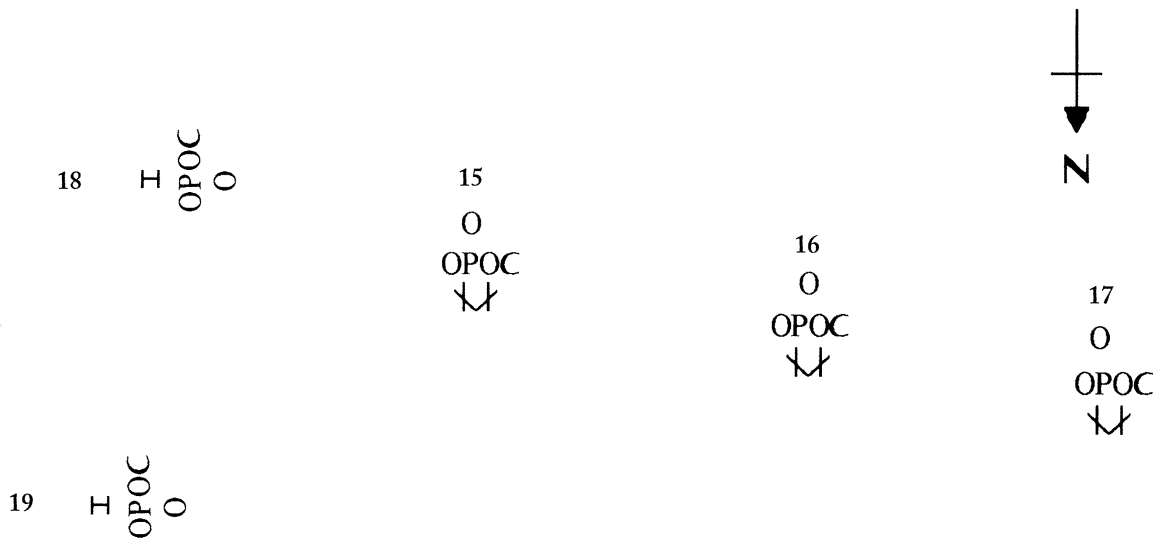
### *HOROI* 5-19

The main issues concerning this group of *horoi* are the number of boundary lines involved and their contemporaneity as a group. As long as these matters cannot be fully clarified, the inscriptions should not be lumped together in discussion of their function. Several observations do hold for them all: conspicuous placement, generally on flat surfaces; deeply cut letters; and general uniformity of letter shapes. These similarities do little, however, beyond providing a sharp contrast to *horoi* 1-4. This does not mean that *horoi* 5-19 all belong to one boundary system. It is my belief that there are unrelated groups among them.

*Horoi* 5-8 may be considered first, as they form an obvious series (Fig. 3). Being the first ones found and published, they have attracted some attention. We have seen that most commentators have viewed them in the context of other groups of *horoi* in Attica and have considered them deme boundary markers of Hellenistic date. This explanation was attractive when only four *horoi* were known and there was but a single boundary line to explain. The greater extent of boundary labeling on the hill that now must be acknowledged reveals a more complicated picture. I have discussed *horoi* 5-8 in an earlier study and suggested that they were cut as a result of decisions recorded in *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1035.<sup>23</sup> That possibility is further considered below.

Among the newly found *horoi*, those flanked above and below by extra letters, 15-19, may with certainty be taken together. They, like 5-8, seem to have been placed so that two lines defined by the *horoi* meet at a right

23. Langdon 1985, p. 259.



**Figure 18.** Layout of *horoi* 15–19.  
Not to scale. Orientations regularized to  
cardinal points.

angle (Fig. 18). *Horoi* 15–17 are roughly oriented to the same east–west line. Extended eastward this line perpendicularly intersects a line following the north–south orientation of 18. This line in turn intersects 19, whose letters are oriented roughly north to south, on a line perpendicular to that marked by 15–17. The result of the arrangement seems to be a division into three plots labeled zeta, mu, and omicron, although no obvious separation of discrete parcels is readily apparent. If *horos* 15 could be taken as marking a point on the eastern boundary of plot mu, that would give us one parcel occupying an area of at least 350 by 150 m on the middle and lower southwestern slope of the hill. How far westward the plot would extend is impossible to determine, since streets and apartment buildings begin immediately west and south of *horoi* 16 and 17. In the absence of companions defining their other sides, little can be said about plots zeta or omicron. Recent quarrying resulting in a large cavity just south of 18 has perhaps destroyed other markers that would have helped us to understand the boundary system on this part of the hill.

The letters added to 15–19 are intriguing but difficult to interpret. One observer suggested that they may be alphabetic numerals, believing that an incised oblique line is preserved to the upper right of the mu in *horos* 15. I believe that the mark is fortuitous and only coincidentally occurs where a diacritic would have been cut to indicate an alphabetic numeral. None of the other extra letters in this series of *horoi* has a diacritic. What all bedrock surfaces on the hill do exhibit is a great variety of long and short grooves that are natural or the result of weathering. The apparent stroke in *horos* 15 is one such groove.<sup>24</sup>

It is possible that the extra letters are truncations of words or proper names. Shortening of words to their initial letter occurs in Greek inscriptions, though infrequently. Terms for capacity or weight are those most susceptible to truncation, as mu for *medimnos* and omicron for *obolos*,<sup>25</sup> to mention only letters from the three that supplement *horoi* 15–19. None of

24. It must be noted that fortuitous weathering grooves often resemble cut letter strokes, especially on photographs. I have examined the rock surfaces around all the *horoi* and am convinced that no other strokes accompanied those recorded here.

25. Mu for *medimnos*: IG II<sup>2</sup> 1672; omicron for *obolos*: IG II<sup>2</sup> 2778 and 2780. For other examples, most of which are graffiti on clay vessels, see Threatte 1980, p. 112.

these is relevant to the context of Alepovouni. In Roman times single letters were common, such as mu for Markos.<sup>26</sup> Zeta and omicron by themselves are not found, but this does not mean that a local circumstance could not have led to truncations of proper names or terms that were obvious on the hill at the time. Witness the use of lambda and mu in the boundary inscriptions on Taygetos mentioned above.

A third explanation of the added letters in *horoi* 15–19 is that they are letter labels. Attic inscriptions reveal that from the Classical period onward, letters of the alphabet were employed in the organization and classification of groups of objects, sections of inscribed texts, and individuals.<sup>27</sup> Plots of land could also be brought under this system of classification, and that may be what we are seeing on Alepovouni.<sup>28</sup> The difficulty with this is that when the system is used, it normally begins with alpha, and the rest of the alphabet follows *seriatim* as far down as needed. The letters here belong to no connected series. They appear instead to have been nonrandomly selected for some deliberate reason, as though they were abbreviations of names or terms. Only the discovery of more evidence would allow a better determination of the role of the extra letters of *horoi* 15–19. At present we may discount the possibility that they are numerals but must allow that they could be abbreviations or labels.

The remaining *horoi* probably functioned at a different time from 15–19, since they lack extra letters. *Horoi* 9–11 have an orientation roughly perpendicular to the line they mark. This is a feature they share with *horoi* 5–8, and all seven may be part of the same boundary line. One corner of this putative boundary is preserved, marked by 7 at the eastern end of the northeast spur. From it the line runs southwestward toward the hilltop. On the western side 9–11 would continue the line from the top in a northwesterly direction. *Horos* 12 is just possibly the last surviving marker in that direction, although it runs parallel, not perpendicularly, to the line. Even if it is omitted, the putative boundary involves the greater part of the hill, dividing it into northern and southern halves. *Horoi* 13 and 14 share a different orientation, in this case roughly parallel to a possible line extending southwestward from the hilltop. They may reveal a further division of the hill's southern half, if they do not belong to an altogether different boundary system.

If the earlier boundary line of *horoi* 1–4 may be seen as a landowner's response to pressure from woodcutters or herb gatherers, it is possible that some or all of the later *horoi* owe their inscribing to similar circumstances. It is also possible that the state was directly involved in establishing some of the boundaries marked with lunate-sigma *horoi*. In that case it is worth considering that measures recorded in *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1035 led to the operation. This fragmentary inscription of the Augustan period or not long thereafter deals primarily with the reclamation of shrines and sacred precincts from encroachments that have taken place on them.<sup>29</sup> A third category of real estate also slated for restoration to the state is public properties. Among these are certain δημόσια ὄρη (line 20), one of which is an ὄρος τὸ πρὸς Ὑμηττῶι (line 58). Alepovouni, by far the most prominent of Hymettos's foothills viewed from Athens, may be this ὄρος.<sup>30</sup>

The foothills, as we call them, that rise to heights of over 200 m near

26. Many examples from among the Imperial abbreviations in Attic inscriptions are given by Larfeld (1902, pp. 524–533).

27. For discussion and bibliography, see Threatch 1980, pp. 117–119.

28. One possible epigraphical parallel is a recent find from the Athenian Agora, of Late Classical or Hellenistic date, in which a contract or lease for *meros delta* is recorded: Lalonde 1992, pp. 375–379. If this is not a reference to a triangular piece of land, it is likely to be a discrete parcel labeled as delta.

29. The inscription has been restudied by Culley (1975=SEG 26.121: text and date; 1977: commentary). Agreement on the date is as remote as ever: see SEG XXXI 107; XXXIII 136.

30. Traill (1986, p. 119) apparently misunderstands the nature of the inscription. He does not see that some of the properties dealt with are nonsacred. He also misrepresents my earlier position in stating that I opted for a sanctuary boundary on Alepovouni.

the western flank of Hymettos were certainly deserving of the term ὄρη, even as the much higher Hymettos behind them was an ὄρος.<sup>31</sup> *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1035 decrees what is allowable on the reclaimed ὄρη: [--- ᾗ] πασιν νέμειν καὶ ὑ]λάζεσθαι (line 59). If Alepovouni is the ὄρος τὸ πρὸς Ὑμηττῶι of the previous line, the inscription could thus reveal a continuity of agricultural activity on its slopes over time, as grazing and wood gathering are among the activities conjectured for the hill (see above). Herb gathering may only appear to be absent. It could have been part of what was designated by ὑλάζεσθαι, a verb usually connected with wood gathering.<sup>32</sup> On this reconstruction the only difference from earlier times is that at some point the hill passed from private to public ownership.

There are difficulties in associating the lunate-sigma *horoi* with *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1035. First, the *horoi* divide the hill into at least two zones, yet the inscription seems to decree the entire ὄρος τὸ πρὸς Ὑμηττῶι public and accessible. The phrase may not, however, be quite so inclusive. The text at this point is quite elliptical. It could mention a mountain near Hymettos as usable without further stating that certain parts of it were posted. The posting is another difficult matter to explain. Do the *horoi* predate the enactment of *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1035, possibly reflecting some configuration of possession before the state became involved? Or were the boundaries drawn up as a result of the decree? The inscription does not provide answers, for there is no mention of the establishment of boundaries in it. Despite these uncertainties, it is my belief that *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1035 provides us with the best evidence available for explaining the cutting of the majority of the *horoi* with lunate sigmas on Alepovouni.<sup>33</sup>

## OTHER ANTIQUITIES ON ALEPOVOUNI

31. While not entirely consistent in their use of the terms *oros* and *lophos*, Greek writers generally used the former for prominent heights. Alepovouni amply qualifies.

32. The same verb occurs twice in line 38, the context being Eetioneia of Peiraieus. Since there can be no question of tree-gathering from a putative forest on that dry headland, we should understand it to include the gathering of scrub vegetation.

33. An airing of my conclusions to an audience at the University of Calgary in March 1997 generated interesting suggestions, which, for lack of evidence, cannot be pursued here. One possibility raised was that Alepovouni was *ager publicus* in the Roman era and that the *horoi* reflect some configuration of leaseholds.

34. Bires 1966, p. 72. The quarrying was confined to the lower northern slope, which is now entirely built over.

Alepovouni is not completely devoid of ancient remains. In this section I describe those that I have encountered and consider possible connections between them and the *horoi*.

The bedrock of Alepovouni is a limestone that has at times been exploited. The quarries that deface the eastern and southern sides of the hill are the most recent. They were opened to obtain gravel during the building boom around Athens in the 1970s. During an earlier Athenian building boom, after the town became Greece's capital, Alepovouni supplied a fair number of building blocks.<sup>34</sup> In antiquity the hill also attracted builders in search of stone. If they found material to their liking and quarried it on any scale, this may have taken place in the same spot where the 19th-century quarries were located, given the frequently repeated occurrence of later reworking of ancient quarries in Attica throughout the ages. The only surviving ancient quarry on the hill is well around the western side, near its base. It is located near the southern end of the strip between two wide footpaths that traverse the hill as continuations of Lydia and Krystalle streets of the *demos* Vyronas (Fig. 3). The quarry, whose date cannot be determined, consists of a column drum partially cut from bedrock (Fig. 19). The drum is 1.30 m in diameter and 0.30 m high at the north and west, where cutting away has completely freed it. A trench 10 cm wide and



Figure 19. Partially quarried column drum on Alepovouni

of variable depth was cut around the rest of the circumference before work was abandoned. There are no other traces of ancient quarrying activity in the area, but since the location is well downslope, it is possible that other cuttings are covered over with earth and other debris. Otherwise, the column drum could be taken as a single prospection that produced unsatisfactory results. Whatever the case, I do not believe that any of the boundary markers should be connected with quarrying activity on the hill. There are no *horoi* near the partially quarried drum, nor is it plausible to imagine that plots were laid out and marked by *horoi* all over the rest of the western slope of the hill for prospections that were never carried out.

Except for some 20th-century crockery, the spacious slopes of Alepovouni are remarkably free of pottery. The only place on the hill yielding ancient sherds is the very top. This is an irregular rocky plateau extending for 30 m from northwest to southeast. A survey column marks the latter point. The width of the plateau is more variable, averaging about 10 m. Around it the slopes fall away at first as a series of gradual, rocky steps. On the plateau and steps, especially those of the southern slope, a spotty scatter of sherds is observable. All the material is very worn, and only a few sherds are informative. I present here a catalogue of the diagnostic pieces.

## 20 Stem of a kylix

P.H. 0.05 m. Straight-sided stem preserving start of conical lower body

and flaring base. Fine, soft pinkish buff clay; unpainted.  
Mycenaean.



- 21 Stem of a kylix  
P.H. 0.045 m. Tapering stem preserving start of conical lower body and flaring base. Brownish red clay; unpainted.  
Mycenaean.
- 22 Lower body fragment of a kylix  
P.H. 0.03 m. Conical lower bowl, beginning of tapering stem. Brownish orange clay; unpainted.  
Mycenaean.
- 23 Lower body fragment of a kylix  
P.H. 0.033 m. Brown clay; unpainted.  
Mycenaean.
- 24 Fragment of a pithos  
Max. p.H. 0.082; max. p.W. 0.112; Th. 0.015 m. Body sherd decorated with band of noughts and crosses on slightly raised band. Brown, gritty clay. The sherd was not found on the top of the hill but at its southern base, near the boundary wall of the Vyronas cemetery. It is included here for the sake of completeness. It may have arrived at its present location from elsewhere in modern times as part of earth fill for the cemetery.  
For parallels and discussion, see *Agora* XII, pp. 193–194.  
6th or early 5th century.
- 25 Rim sherd of a lekane  
Max. p.H. 0.027; max. p.W. 0.035 m. Rim slightly undercut. Brown clay.  
As *Agora* XII, pp. 212–213, no. 1758–9.  
6th century.
- 26 Rim sherd and four nonjoining body sherds of a combed kalathos  
Max. p.H. 0.062; max. p.W. 0.073; Th. of body 0.03; Th. of rim 0.014 m. Flat-topped thickened rim. Groups of incised vertical and horizontal striations on the interior.  
Most like *Thorikos* IX, p. 66, inv. TC 63.168.  
Undated.

In addition to the above, six coarse-ware bases, handles, and body sherds and an equal number of fine, thin-walled, black-glazed body sherds were counted.

The most interesting item is 26, the first evidence of a beehive on the hill. The editor of *horoi* 5–8 once argued that those inscriptions bounded an apiary, but the absence of beehive fragments has kept his conclusion from gaining acceptance. The finding of fragments of a clay beehive on top of the hill does not, I think, alter the situation. There are still no sherds of beehives anywhere else on the hill, an unlikely result if bee farms were established on its slopes in large enough numbers to result in plots with labeled boundaries. None of the *horoi*, in my opinion, should be explained in connection with apiculture. All that can be said of the fragments at hand is that one swarm of honeybees was provided for on Alepovouni at some point in antiquity.<sup>35</sup>

Also of interest are the fragments of Mycenaean kylikes. They allow Alepovouni to be added to the list of Hymettian outliers that have produced Bronze Age material.<sup>36</sup> Although the Early and Middle Helladic periods are better represented on Hymettos's western flank, there is enough Mycenaean pottery to suggest at least scattered settlement. The kylikes from Alepovouni may indicate that the hill was part of one such site.<sup>37</sup>

Some may be tempted by the Archaic material to count Alepovouni among the hilltop shrines of Attica. It must be pointed out, however, that

35. Ober now appears to have backpedaled from the bee-farm hypothesis (1981, p. 77): see Ober 1995, p. 119.

36. The list proceeds from north to south: Gur-i-korakut: EH sauceboat fragments, one LH sherd (personal autopsy; Brommer 1972, p. 262, no. 120); Hill 260.3: prehistoric (Brommer 1972, p. 262, no. 123); Zoodochos Piyi: EH (Knigge 1977); Kaisariani monastery: EH and LH (Hope Simpson 1981, p. 43, site B2).

37. I would now explain the miscellaneous collection of prehistoric sherds found in the later votive deposit near the summit of Mount Hymettos as relics taken to the mountaintop by Iron Age worshipers who encountered Bronze Age deposits along the base of the mountain. For the material, see Langdon 1976, pp. 53–55.

other evidence of sanctuary activity, such as traces of burning or fragments of animal bone, is lacking. Whatever the correct explanation for the pottery at the top of Alepovouni, none of the rupestral *horoi* had any connection with it. It was only at some considerable time after the pottery sequence ceases that the boundary inscriptions were cut.

## CONCLUSIONS

At some time during the later Classical or Hellenistic period a line of boundary markers oriented from north to south was cut into the bedrock of the northeast spur of Alepovouni (*horoi* 1, 2, and 4). During the Roman Imperial era, probably on more than one occasion, boundary markers were again cut into the hill's bedrock at various places and with various orientations (*horoi* 5–19). None of these boundary-marking occasions resulted in or from activity that has left archaeological traces. Whether cut by private landowners or at the behest of state authorities, the *horoi* may have been a response to pressures being exerted on Alepovouni's natural resources of herbs and trees by the large population of nearby Athens. The *horoi* made clear to visitors what land was private and what was public.

# APPENDIX 1

## TWO *HOROI* ON THE THEOLOGY RIDGE

“Theology Ridge” (= TR) is the name I give to the low, flat projection lying immediately north of Alepovouni and separated from it by a dry watercourse. At the western end of the ridge, just before it begins to slope gently down to the west, stands the building housing the Theology School of the University of Athens. Two *horoi* cut into bedrock near this building were discovered in the winter of 1993 by Aleydis Van de Moortel. They are here numbered separately from the Alepovouni markers.

### TR 1 *Horos*

Fig. 20

A rough surface of rock, 30 m east of the southeast corner of the Theology School building. L.H. of initial omicron 0.08; rho 0.11; second omicron 0.07; sigma 0.07; length 0.305 m.

OPOC

Northwest to southeast orientation, reader facing northeast.

### TR 2 *Horos*

Fig. 21

A flat expanse of rock, 20 m east

of TR 1. L.H. of initial omicron 0.095; rho 0.14; second omicron 0.11; sigma 0.10; length 0.455 m.

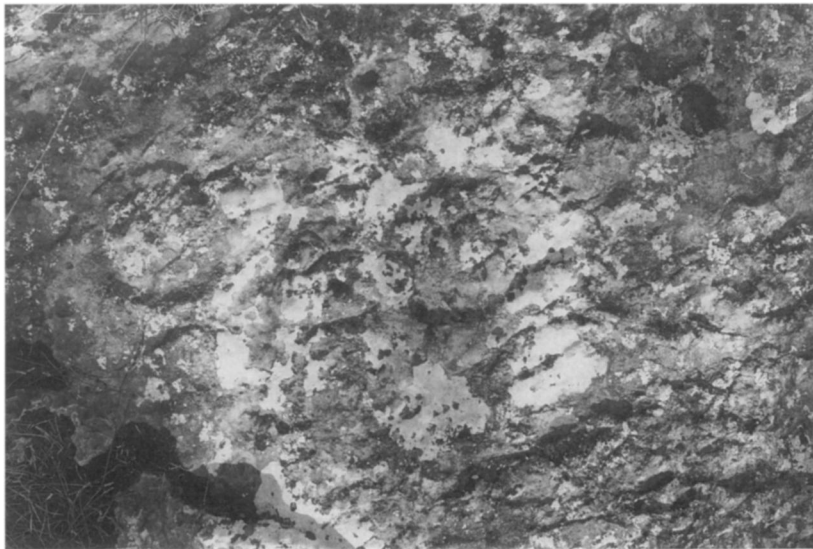
OPOC

Northwest to southeast orientation, reader facing northeast.

In the winter of 1997, a service road was bulldozed to within centimeters of TR 2 as preparatory work for future university buildings. Despite efforts of the Second Ephoreia to save it, this *horos* may well be lost in the near future.

In view of the ridge’s proximity to Alepovouni, it is tempting to conclude that the *horoi* of both were part of the same operation or at least cut for similar reasons, a possibility also raised earlier for *horoi* elsewhere on that part of Hymettos most exposed to Athens. Constant foraging could have made it desirable to establish clearly the limits of private property on ridges and hills alike.

There is one major difference in the setting, however, that allows a different explanation for the ridge’s two *horoi*. In contrast to Alepovouni, the slopes of the Theology Ridge were terraced for agricultural use in antiquity. Preserved terraces are located some 350–400 m southwest of the Theology School building. Here the southern slope of the ridge has been shaped into a series of low, level strips of ground by means of retaining walls built of single courses of rough fieldstones. The walls all run parallel to the contour, southeast to northwest at this point. Excavations at several

Figure 20. *Horos* TR 1Figure 21. *Horos* TR 2

points along the best-preserved wall (Fig. 22) have established that they are ancient.<sup>38</sup> Although no system of terrace walls can be seen closer to the rupestral *horoi*, this could be because other walls were destroyed during construction of the university grounds and expansion of the community of Zographou onto the ridge. Much bulldozing away of rock and infilling with earth has taken place all over the ridge. Not only could terrace walls have been lost during these operations but other rock-cut *horoi* as well. If there is a relationship between them, the *horoi* could mark off separately owned terraced plots.<sup>39</sup>

38. See I. Dekoulakou, *ArchDelt* 38 (1983) B1, p. 46. This evidence is not considered by Foxhall (1996), who attempts to cast doubt on the antiquity of all terraces in Greece claimed to belong to ancient Greek times.

39. Alternatively, the excavator believes that crosswalls running perpendicularly to the terraces served as boundaries.



Figure 22. Ancient terrace wall on  
Theology Ridge

## APPENDIX 2

### COORDINATES OF THE *HOROI*

<i>Horos</i>	East Longitude 23°46'	North Latitude 37°57'
1	23.91"	44.58"
2	22.51"	51.22"
3	21.99"	51.94"
4	21.08"	53.00"
5	18.76"	40.60"
7	25.09"	44.42"
8	26.63"	42.94"
9	10.48"	41.17"
10	5.63"	43.63"
11	1.97"	44.74"
12	55.86"	52.61"
13	9.58"	40.20"
14	6.11"	39.23"
15	5.75"	36.43"
16	58.01"	37.20"
17	55.36"	38.09"
18	9.25"	35.69"
19	10.56"	38.83"
TR 1	39.05"	6.22"
TR 2	40.06"	5.46"



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