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The Origins of the First Inhabitants of Nikopolis

As we have heard immediately before, Roman writers did not explain precisely the juridical status given to the city of Nicopolis founded near the battle-field off Actium. The denominations as *Actium colonia Augusti cum civitate libera Nicopolitana* (Plin. n. h. 4, 1, 5) or as *Romana colonia* (Tac. Ann. 5, 10) do not describe this status¹. As Prof. Kahrstedt, 34 years ago, has demonstrated², there are no traces of Roman settlers in Nicopolis, neither of veterans of the army or the fleet nor of plebeians from the capital or from any other province. At the occasion of Germanicus' journey to Syria in 18 A.C., passing through Nicopolis, Athens, the island of Euboea, Lesbos and Byzantium, Tacitus calls Nicopolis *urbs Achaiae* not yet *urbs Epiri* nor *Molossorum* nor *Thesprotorum* nor more specially *Cassiopaeorum* (Ann. 2, 53). Such a denomination would have reflected the Greek custom we know from Strabo (7, 7, 6 p. 325C̄). From autopsy, Strabo mentions as settlements near to Nicopolis: Ambracia, αἱ δ' ἄλλαι κατοικίαι περιπόλιοι τῆς Νικοπόλεως εἰσίν. In the view of this late hellenistic geographer Nicopolis was founded by means of a synoecism of the citizens of πόλεις τελείως ἐκλελειμμένας so quickly, that ἡ Νικόπολις εὐανδρεῖ καὶ λαμβάνει καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπίδοσιν.

This report makes us understand that settlers from the regions in the north of the Gulf of Ambracia had been transferred from Epirus to Nicopolis³. In Strabo's

1. For these testimonies cf. *Th. Ch. Sarikakis*; *Balkan Studies* 11 (1970), 91–96 with *J. and L. Robert*; *REG* 85 (1972), 414 no. 242: In the first century of the Principate the imprecise use of the term *colonia* is astonishing: *Augusta Treverorum* is named *colonia Treverorum* in the first mentioning in an inscription from Mainz: *H. Wolff*; *Historia* 26 (1977) 204–242, cf. the catalogue *Trier, Augustusstadt der Treverer* (Trier 1984) 40 f. 251; and according Tacitus, *Germania* c. 41 *Hermundurorum civitas* is said to have *commercium (cum Romanis) in splendidissima Raetiae provinciae colonia sc. Augusta Vindelicum*, now Augsburg; but each *Polis Augusta* is a *civitas (indigenarum)*, not a *colonia*. In *IG² IX 1, 92* not *Nicopolis* is mentioned as *colonia nostra*, but *colonia Patrensis*.

2. *U. Kahrstedt*, *Die Territorien von Patras und Nikopolis in der Kaiserzeit*; *Historia* 1 (1950) 549–561. *A. Philippson – E. Kirsten*, *Die griechischen Landschaften* (abridged: *PhK*) II (Frankfurt 1956/8) 610. *Prosopography of all known citizens of Nicopolis* in: *Th. Ch. Sarikakis*; *Arch. Ephem.* (1970) 66–85 with corrections by *J. and L. Robert*; *REG* 85 (1972) 413 f. no. 242.

3. The terminus for such an enforced transmigration is *ἐρημωθῆναι* in Strabo and Pausanias; the result is *ἐρημία* instead of a former existing settlement (*Polis*). Strabo covers his lack of geographical knowledge of Aetolia with the theology of *ἐννοίας φυσικᾶς* (10, 3, 23 p. 474 C).

text the following paragraphs do not describe the contemporaneous situation in the times of Augustus and Strabo himself, but the older history of the Epirote and Illyrian tribes prior to the construction of the via Egnatia recently acknowledged as the work of a proconsul Cn. Egnatius⁴ mentioned on a milestone found near Thessalonica (Strabo 7, 7, 8 p. 327 C and F 10, from Polyb. 34, 12). This report is continued in Strabo 8, 1, 1 p. 332 C with the Greek, not the Epirote tribes: Ἀκαρνᾶνες καὶ Αἰτωλοὶ καὶ Λοκροὶ οἱ Ὀζόλαι. However, the only feature characteristic of these regions known to the geographer is their being a desert suited for the breeding of horses (8, 8, 1 p. 388 C.: καὶ ἡ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν δὲ καὶ Ἀκαρνάνων ἐρημία πρὸς ἵπποτροφίαν εὐφυῆς γέγονεν).

Nevertheless, drawing from older sources of geographical descriptions Strabo mentions both these tribes as situated on the western frontier of Thessaly in book 9, 5, 1 p. 429 C. Only in his tenth book does Strabo supply us with additional informations about Nicopolis: Anactorion is situated at the distance of 40 stadia id est 5 Roman miles from Actium (10, 2, 7 p. 451 C) on the shore of Acarnania; the city serves for Nicopolis as an harbour town (ἐμπόριον τῆς νῦν ἐκτισμένης ἐφ' ἡμῶν Νικοπόλεως: (10, 2, 2, p. 450C) and joins the port of Alyzia (beyond the region near Leucas) by a road⁵ (via Stratos? in the hinterland), and Alyzia (10, 2, 21 p. 459 C) was also situated in a desert (ἐρημία). Astakos and ἄκρα Κριθωτῆ are referred to in 10, 2, 21 p. 459 as good harbours (εὐλίμενα) from the Geography of Artemidoros (p. 460 C). Strabo's catalogue contains Stratos, Oiniadai ἢ νῦν in the eastern parts of Acarnania, Palairos, Alyzia, Leucas in the western ones, and Argos Amphilochikon and Ambracia in the northeast (10, 2, 2 p. 450), but he adds: ὧν αἱ πλεῖσται περιοικίδες γεγόνασιν ἢ καὶ πᾶσαι τῆς Νικοπόλεως. In Aetolia, on the eastern side of river Acheloos, there is Lysimachia ἠφανισμένη καὶ αὐτῆ (10, 2, 22 p. 460). Knowing nothing exactly about these regions, Strabo continues making capital of Apollodoros' Commentaries for the interpretation of testimonies from Homer to illustrate the territories as far as the so called Little Dardanelles of Rhion and Antirhion. These passages from Apollodoros he mixes up with stories about the Kuretes drawn from Demetrios of Skepsis. Summing up all these mentionings, we may conceive a processus — given in present terms: Νικόπολις ... λαμβάνει καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπίδοσιν, contemporaneous to Strabo's visit to Nicopolis —, a processus of transmigration from Acarnanian, Aetolian and Amphilochian cities to Nicopolis

4. This proconsul of an unknown date, but before Polybios' mentioning the road by his name, appeared on a milestone published by C. Romiopoulou: BCH 98 (1974) 813/6; G. Daux, Journ. Savants (1977) 145–63, dated (141–121) by P. Collart: BCH 100, (1976), 182 f., with the Roberts: REG 89 (1976) 494.90, 1977, 316.

5. For this road cf. Tab. Peut. with Guido 112 and Geogr. Rav. 5, 13 in K. Miller, Itineraria Romana. Stuttgart 1916, 562 ff. For recent discussion cf. W. Kendrick Pritchett, Studies on ancient Greek Topography 3 (Berkeley 1980) 280/6, for the testimonies PhK II 614 f. and P. Soustal: Tabula imperii Byzantini (TIB) 3 = Denkschr. ÖAW 150 (Wien 1981) 93 n. 32. The same places also in Ptol. 3, 14, 6 and 10, also from an itinerary I believe. On Alyzia recently W.M. Murray: AJA 88 (1984) 193–199.

and an other(?) of transformation of the political status of poleis – members of the hellenistic Koina existing there as an analogy with the perioeci – poleis in Laconia incorporated within the Lacedaemonians, but liberated by Augustus to become poleis of the Eleutherolacones. In a reciprocal contrast with Laconia whole the region, from the mountains of the Cassopaei to the frontier of the Roman colony of Patras (in possession of the former territory of the poleis of Calydon and Pleuron in SW Aetolia), possessed but one town in Roman times: our Nicopolis.

Augustus' foundation of Nicopolis meant the constitution of a greater Epirus. Its later result is to be seen in the continuity of the status of Epirus as a province. From Tacitus (Ann. 2, 53) we have learnt that Nicopolis was a town in the recently founded Provincia Achaia with the governor's residence at Corinth. In 67, however, during his stay in Greece, Nero restored freedom to all Greek cities. This proclamation issued pompously in the stadium of Isthmia abolished the government of Achaia with its seat at Corinth⁶. Epirus as a barbarous country once conquered by the Romans (and recently including also Nicopolis) remained excluded. From thence a province of Epirus with the governor's seat at Nicopolis came into being. A few months after Nero's death the province of Achaia was reconstituted once more by Emperor Vespasian, but the new governor at Corinth ruled over Peloponnesus and the east of Central Greece (over Thessaly also until Antoninus Pius), but not over Epirus⁷. This situation is reflected in the geographical works written by Claudius Ptolemaeus in Alexandria in Egypt under the reign of Emperor Pius. Using the term of 'Achaia' in the same meaning as 'Hellas' he begins the catalogue of Greek maritime cities at the mouth of river Achelous (3, 15,1): ὅς ἐστιν ὄριον τῆς Ἡπείρου ἐν τῷ Ἀδριατικῷ πελάγει) and that of the hinterland – cities (3, 15, 14: πόλεις ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι μεσόγειοι) with Chalcis on foot of Mount Varassova and erroneously adds Pleuron and Calydon not existing after Augustus. Nicopolis, Actium, Alyzia, Astakos are not registered under the headline of 'Hellas' or 'Achaia', but in the chapters concerning Epirus (and Acarnania) in 3, 14, 5 – 6, 10.

Some years later, Pausanias has generalized the demographic evolution of all the regions situated outside of the topic of his *Perihegesis Hellados* sc. beyond the western border of the Ozolian Locroi at Naupactos (10, 38, 4 and 9). The shore between Amphissa and Naupactos was given to the Achaioi Patreis, the Locroi fled

6. For Acarnania as a part of (Provincia) Achaia see Strabo 17, 3, 25 p. 840 C. and G. Klaffenbach in IG 3 IX 1, 2 p. XXXI ignoring Pliny's descriptions (criticized by U. Kahrstedt, *Symbolae Osloenses* 28 (1950) 70–76) and with PhK II 592.633 n. 68. Nero's proclamation (Syll. 812) did not name Epirus.

7. On Roman Epirus see Klaffenbach l.c.; U. Kahrstedt: *Historia* 1 (1950) 558 f., PhK II 224 f. N. Hammond, *Epirus*, Oxford 1967, 690–700. In Procop (aed. 4, 2, 1; 23) the frontiers of Hellas against Epirus, Aitoloi and Acarnanes are the gulfs of Itea and Patras. Traian as founder of the province Epirus: Th. Ch. Sarikakis, *Hellenika* 19 (1966) 193 ff.

to Amphissa, the inhabitants of which adopted from thence the name of Aetolians; southeastern Aetolians from Calydon⁸ and Αἰτωλία ἢ ἄλλη were transferred to Nicopolis (Paus. 7, 18, 8), their sacral possessions (ἀγάλματα) divided between Patreis and Nicopolitans; the Aetolian rights to participate in the amphictiony of Delphi, since then (with 6 votes), were given to Nicopolis (Paus. 10, 8, 3). Epirus with Nicopolis, with Ambracia and Anactorium is not included into Greece as described by Pausanias (5, 23, 3). In all the later lists of Greek countries and cities Nicopolis remains outside of Achaia or Hellas. Much later, Byzantine classicists went back to the old names to denominate the medieval despotate of Epirus. To them, the dynasty of Angelus Comnenus, preserved from the Frankish conquest of 1204, ruled over Aetolia or Acarnania⁹, the former land of Acarnanians and Aetolians (but Amphilocheians, Thesprotians and so on, in Epirus too) given into Nicopolis by synoecism long time ago. Thus, it seems to me, that only from the list of names of places delivered by Ptolemaeus (and later on from the maps utilizing these lists) did people know the names of the tribes and citizenships transferred to Nicopolis together with their ritual belongings, statues and sanctuaries by Octavianus Augustus according to his rights as a conqueror won at Actium comprising the exportation of λάφουρα (Paus. 7, 18, 9).

All the details mentioned by the literary tradition are confirmed by the investigations of archaeologists and historical geographers. I shall recur to my own photographs from journeys to Western Greece in 1935, 1939, 1979, 1984, to topographical maps of sites in Acarnania, Aetolia, Amphilocheia from the times of W.J. Woodhouse and F. Noack introduced into the geographical descriptions of E. Oberhammer and A. Philippson¹⁰ and some of them reprinted in my contributions to the "Realencyclopädie der Klass. Altertumswissenschaft" (from 1937 onwards) or in the last editions of the "Griechenlandkunde" (last time 1967).

8. On Calydon, the fishing nearby (Strabo 10, 2, 21, p. 460 C.) and on the cult of Artemis Laphria see *Kahrstedt* I. c. PhK II 354. 613 f. *E. Kirsten* – *W. Kraiker*, *Griechenlandkunde* (abridged: Grldkde), ⁵ Heidelberg 1967, 766–773. Also Pleuron and Thermon (and Stratos too?) were incorporated into the territory of Patrai: *E. Kirsten*: RE 21 (1951) 245. PhK II 354, cf. the argumentation from the funeral inscriptions in n. 16 and for the frontiers of Hellas against Aetolia the end of n. 15. Pausanias pretends in 10, 38, 4 Αἰτωλοὺς (not also Ἀκαρνᾶνας or Ἀμφιλόχους) to have been objects of the Roman Emperor's measures ἀναστάτους εἰς τὸν Νικοπόλεως συνοικισμὸν, in 5, 23, 3 the inhabitants of Ambracia and Anactorion too. For Nicopolis and the Delphic Amphictiony see *G. Daux*: *CRAI* (1976) 348–362.

9. On Aitolia, Acarnania PhK II 227.232.575 n. 33.594 n. 69. *P. Soustal*: TIB 3, 39.

10. *E. Oberhammer*, *Akarnanien, Ambrakia, Amphilocheia, Leukas im Altertum*, München 1889. *W.J. Woodhouse*, *Aetolia*, Oxford 1897. *F. Noack*: AA (1897) 80–83 and AA (1916) 215–239. *E. Kirsten*, AA (1941) 99–119 and AA (1964) 892–910. *A. D. Paliouras*, *Aitolokarnania* (Ioannina 1981, in Greek, not seen). PhK II 357 ff. 410. ff. 600 ff. Grldkde. 755–773.

From all these investigations it is well known, where the inhabitants of Nicopolis founded immediately after the victory at the mouth of the Gulf of Ambracia came from. Originally, they had stayed at the fortresses bordering both banks of river Achelous. These are mentioned in inscriptions as well as in reports on the campaigns of Philip V of Macedonia or the Romans¹¹. They are built within circuit – walls of a length varying from 1,5 to 8, even to 10 km. Many doors opened to let in the cattle and protect it from invaders menacing the territory of the respective polis. Only a small part of the fortified surface would bear housing buildings. Whole a unity of natural space would be encircled within these huge enclosures. To describe this type of fortresses¹² I have used the term of "Landschaftsfestung".

The enclosures consisted of polygonal or isodomic constructions according to the local material. Following the ancient travellers as early as F. Noack had assumed polygonal constructions to have been adopted only during the archaic and early classical period. As early as 1935, however, I have been able to demonstrate that at Oiniadai such polygonal constructions are due to the third century B.C., when Philip V of Macedonia had them built or at least advised to do so¹³. The excavations at Kassope directed by professor Dakaris have confirmed my datation by analogy. So did Prof. N. Hammond's observations on the coexistence of polygonal and isodome (ashlar) walls in Epirus.

All of these fortresses have been deserted; their houses have been destroyed, their walls are preserved. As well as in the case of Kassope we may presume for all

11. For these campaigns cf. *E. Kirsten*, *Die albanische Frage des Altertums*, *Welt als Geschichte* (periodical) 8 (1942) 75–96; PhK II 339 f. 398–402 and my articles in *Realencyclopaedie* (RE) about Oiniadai, Paianion, Pamphila, Pleuron, Phytaiion, Proschion, for the landscapes also *E. Kirsten*, *Landschaft und Geschichte in der antiken Welt*, Bonn 1984, 103–130; PhK II 558 ff.

12. Compare the statistics for Epirus in *Hammond* l.c. 659 in his study on the coexistence of the 'Styles' of used material l.c. 551 ff. 668 ff. 713/6. First use of the German terminus 'Landschaftsfestungen' in *E. Kirsten*, *Die griech. Polis als historisch – geographisches Problem* (= *Colloquium geographicum* 5, Bonn 1956, reprinted Mainz 1987 (abridged: *Polis*) 56 ff. cf. PhK II 608 ff. AA 1964, 909. *Grldkde.* 37. 719 f. with the discussions in: *E. E. Winter*, *Greek Fortifications*, London 1971. *A. Wokalek*, *Griech. Stadtbefestigungen*, Bonn 1973. *A. W. Lawrence*, *Greek Aims in Fortification*, Oxford 1979. Since Soteriades', studies we miss a mapping of the walls surrounding the sanctuary at Thermon (*Winter* l.c. 50) built later than Philip's invasion in 218 and 207 (PhK II 343) as those protecting the sanctuary of Dodona after the preceding Aetolian raid in 219 (*Grldkde* 739–747 after Prof. Dakaris' publications). Both these enclosures had to defend garrisons, not citizens, thence their extensions are much smaller than the 'Landschaftsfestungen' and like Paianion in Aetolia, existing before 219, but dismantled quickly in summer 219 (for the texts see the *Fasti* in *IG² IX 1,1* and 2). Agrinion mentioned in 314 too had a small extension and a flat position in the type of Mantinea or as Halos in Phthiotis founded at the end of 4 th cent. B.C.: (*R. Reinders*: *AAA* 12 (1979) 59–62) – but there too we miss a Greek plan after the excavations of *G. Miliadis*: *Praktika* (1928) 96–100 (*TIB* 3, 280. *Paliouras* l.c. 117–120).

13. About Oiniadai the right interpretation had been formulated earlier by *H. Lolling* in his never published manuscript for the first 'Baedeker' of Greece, the so called *Ur – Baedeker*: *E. Kirsten*: *RE* 17 (1939) 2227. See the critics in PhK II 340. 402. 413. 608–612.

the fortified places of Acarnania the inhabitants having carried away all of their furniture and the beams of support. They could not destroy the city – walls; thus they still testify to the multitude of pre – Roman settlements¹⁴. Their former inhabitants emigrated to Nicopolis. As a matter of fact, only few of the settlements are still mentioned in Roman geographical sources or have been proved by archeologists. The only more important settlement of the late Roman Empire in this country is situated at the place of the former Corinthian colony of Anactorium, attested indeed, as we heard, as the harbour of Nicopolis on the shore of Acarnania. On its territory, but more to the east, at Drymos¹⁵, also christian churches have been found recently.

Unfortunately, F. Noack's mapping of the ruins observed at Hagios Petros, on the site of Anactorium, were lost in Berlin during the last war, and the position of Preveza military airbase may not allow to carry on a new study there.

To demonstrate the contrast between Nicopolis and the enclosures from hellenistic times in Acarnania and Aetolia I like to republish here F. Noack's plan of Thyrraeon at Hagios Vasilios (fig. 1). From the long series of slides presented during my conference at Preveza Beach you see one of the enclosures with the greatest extension and perhaps the latest one: Thyrraeon¹⁶ was the capital of the last free part of Acarnania, the westacarnanian Koinon in friendly relations with Rome in the last

14. From *Noack's* manuscripts I republished the plans of Metropolis (at Palaio – Manina with the famous Avloporta: AA (1916) 227 ff. 233) in RE 18 I 2365, Oiniadai in RE 17, 2217 and 2219, Paianion in RE 18 I 2370, Palairos in RE 18 II 2485, Phoitiiai in RE 20, 442. Phytaiion in RE 20, 1174, Pleuron in RE 21, 250 and 254, Thyrraeon in Polis 59 fig. 4. There exist the plans of the Landschaftsfestungen of Calydon in *F. Poulsen – K. Rhomaios*, in: Bull. Danish Acad. Copenhag. 14, 3 (1927), of Stratos in *F. Courby – Ch. Picard*, Recherches archéologiques à Stratos, Paris 1924, hence in Grldkde 760 fig. 189, of Chalcis by *Noack*: AA (1916) 238 with 'Beilage'. Recently *P. Themelis*: AAA 12 (1979) 248 fig. 3 published *Th. Thomaidēs'* plan of Kallion – Kallipolis in Eastern Aetolia, but supposed that the big enclosure described already by me in AA (1941) 108 and in Landschaft l.c. 126 f. pl. 6,4 and 8,1 was used only between ca. 350 and 279 B.C. cf. again *P. Themelis*, Ann. Sc. Ht. Atene 61 (1983) 237.

15. For the excavations near modern Drymos, once a port of Thyrraeon, see *E. Mastrokostas*: AAA 4 (1971) 183 – 195 with *the Roberts*: REG 85 (1972) 412 f. no. 240, *Soustal*: TIB 3, 148. Here we see the same revival of a settlement – not a polis, but perhaps with a villa as first nucleus – as observed in the Late Empire also at Agrinion (Zapanti: AA 1941, 100. PhK II 613/5. TIB 3, 280), Alyzia (Mytikas: TIB 3, 170), Astakos (Dragameston: TIB 3. 144). In contrast, the ruins in the lowest part of Kallion, now flooded by the Mornos Technical Lake, belonged to a settlement existing from the 1th to the mid of the 3rd century A.C. and then to his reconstruction with a Christian Basilica (*Ph. Zapheirpoulou*: Arch. Ephem. (1982) B 1 – 13). That may have been one of the settlements of Aetolian refugees in thence Amphissean Locris (Paus 10, 38, 4) and so one τῆς Αἰτωλίας πόλεων in the edict published in 401/2. after Alarich's invasion to Greece 396, and concerning the praepositi hogreorum for Hellas (Central Greece) at Scarpheia, for Peloponnesus in Corinthus (Syll. 3908, regarding thus the minor and the major pars of Hellas or Achaia in Ptol. and Hierocles).

16. The history of Thyrraeon as given by *Fiehn* in: RE 6 A (1936) 744 – 7 is to be supplied from IG 21X 1 p. 8 ff. Polis 58 f (with the same plan): PhK II 386. 610 ff. The length of the curtines had been measured by *Noack* as 9,914 km (AA 1916, 219). Cicero's visit: ad fam. 16.5.1. Funeral inscriptions naming I suppose remigrates from Nicopolis (without this specification): IG 21X 1 no. 312 b. 350/2.380. The indication of the dead's age is a custom of Roman Times at Stratos (ibid. no 413), at Boucation and at Phistyon in Aetolia Patrensis (ibid. No. 113 f. (and

century B.C. (and thus Cicero paid a visit there to a Greek friend in 50). As at Anactorium and near Drymos also at Hagios Vasilios during the imperial age tombstones were erected by inhabitants (citizens) of Nicopolis. All the Θυρρεῖοι had abandoned their native town for Nicopolis after 30 B.C., so we may end this paper with the verses of a contemporaneous epigram in the *Anthologia Palatina* (9, 553):

Λευκάδος ἀντὶ με Καῖσαρ ἰδ' Ἀμβρακίης ἐριβόλου
 Θυρρείου τε πέλειν ἀντὶ τ' Ἀνακτορίου
 ἄργεος Ἀμφιλόχου τε καὶ ὀππόσα
 ῥαῖσατο κύκλω
 ἄστε' ἐπιθρώσκων δουρομανῆς πόλεμος
 εἶσατο Νικόπολιν, θεῖην πόλιν· ἀντὶ δὲ νίκης
 Φοῖβος ἄναξ ταύτην δέχνυται Ἀκτιάδος.

indeed always at Nicopolis: *U. Kahrstedt, Das wirtschaftliche Gesicht Griechenlands in der Kaiserzeit, Bern 1954, 34 f. 279 f., confirmed by the recent findings in: AAA 4, 193 (Drymos) and 6 (1973), 226; AD 26 B 335 with L. Robert: REG 90, (1977) 358 no 263 (Nicopolis).*

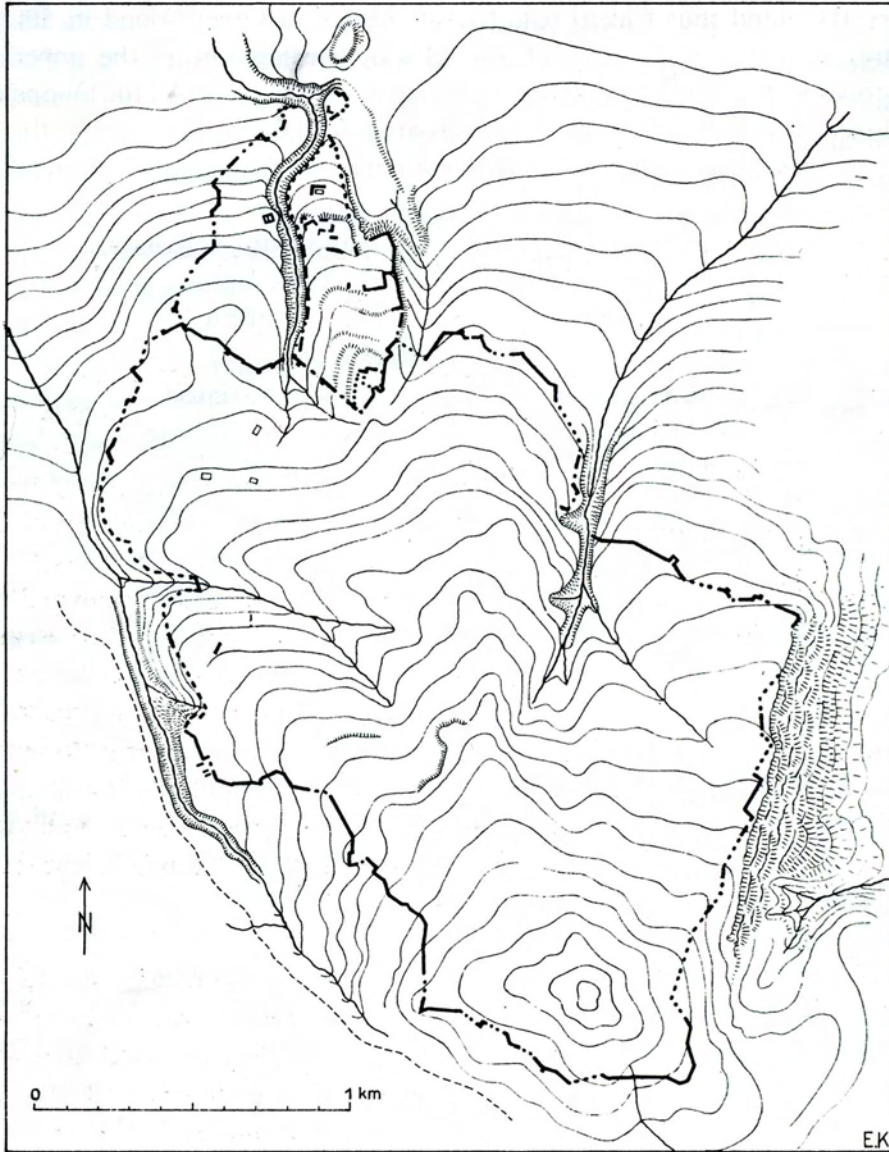


Fig. 1. Plan of Thyreion's circuit-walls from F. Noack's manuscripts.