

PAPERS AND MONOGRAPHS OF THE FINNISH INSTITUTE AT ATHENS VOL. II

# THE PNYX IN THE HISTORY OF ATHENS



Edited by  
Björn Forsén and Greg Stanton

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Björn Forsén and Greg Stanton

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# The White Poros Wall on the Athenian Pnyx: Character and Context

David H. Conwell

An essential part of Athens' ancient defensive system crossed the Pnyx.<sup>1</sup> Generally identified as the diateichisma referred to in *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 463, this fortification wall is best known for its early Hellenistic phase. The present discussion addresses a portion of the successor to that original construction, the so-called White Poros Wall. Our understanding of this monument's structural and historical importance has yet to proceed beyond the interpretations supplied in the final excavation report — which appeared more than fifty years ago.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to the conscientious work of excavation and publication by Homer Thompson and Robert Scranton, it is possible to revisit a variety of issues relative to the White Poros Wall. This paper (1) synthesizes the descriptive information provided in the final report, (2) considers the date of the wall, and (3) places the structure in its architectural context.

The Pnyx diateichisma's second phase consisted of two quite different constructions (Plan 1). The southern portion, from the area of the East Stoa to the Mouseion, consisted of the refurbished phase-one diateichisma, known to its excavators as the "Compartment Wall". This structure does not concern us for the most part, for the work on it at this time was minor in scale.<sup>3</sup> The important gateway in this particular stretch of the diateichisma and a tower on the Mouseion, however, will be discussed below. North of the refurbished Compartment Wall, on the central portion of the Pnyx Range — the Pnyx

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Forsén and Professor Stanton for inviting me to speak at the Pnyx colloquium, and the Finnish Institute for hosting this important event. I am deeply indebted also to Dr. Judith Binder, who in my absence delivered this paper; we are indeed fortunate to have such a devoted student of Athens' past. I am grateful to the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, particularly its director, Professor W.D.E. Coulson, for permission to publish illustrations from *Hesperia* and to refer to one of the Agora excavation notebooks. For various sorts of assistance, I thank also Dr. D.G. Romano, Professor R. Rosen, Miss O. Sander, and Mr. T. Zachmann.

<sup>2</sup> The Pnyx excavations by Thompson and Scranton were carried out in 1932, 1934, 1936 and 1937. Thompson and Scranton (1943) constitutes the final publication of the diateichisma excavation, while Thompson (1936), 192-200 publishes a short account of the first two seasons' work.

<sup>3</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 340 ("incidental repairs"), 352.

proper, that is<sup>4</sup> — a construction now known as the “White Poros Wall” replaced the original diateichisma.<sup>5</sup>

The sole material used in the new wall’s fabric, so far as preserved, was a light-colored limestone of a sort often imprecisely labelled “poros”.<sup>6</sup> The blocks of the curtains were laid in a simple fashion.<sup>7</sup> Each course consisted of blocks laid in two rows, one of stretchers, the other of headers.<sup>8</sup> Either face of the wall consisted of alternating courses of headers and stretchers, for from one course to the next, the rows of headers and stretchers traded positions, switching from one side of the wall to the other. The White Poros Wall was about 2.00 m. thick.<sup>9</sup> Its original height is unknown, although Scranton concludes that the wall’s superstructure was built out of masonry rather than mudbrick.<sup>10</sup>

Augmenting the curtains were buttresses, towers and gates. The buttresses lined the construction’s inner face, generally at intervals of about 4.60 m. (Plan 1 and Figs. 51-52).<sup>11</sup> They were built of stacked pairs of ashlar blocks, and measured some 1.35-1.40 m. per side. Whether the buttresses were joined by vaults or not is unclear. Since the excavation turned up no voussoirs, Scranton concludes that there was no vaulting;<sup>12</sup> Thompson, more recently, suggests the opposite.<sup>13</sup>

Seven constructions projecting from the White Poros Wall are identified as towers (Plan 1). That the installation at W6 (Fig. 52) was a tower is not to be doubted, for it had a ground-floor room. But no published evidence conclusively demonstrates the nature of the other structures, and at least some of these could have been bastions. Whatever the truth may be, in order not to confuse matters I here simply maintain the original designation of all the constructions as towers.

The towers were generally some 40 m. distant from one another.<sup>14</sup> Tower W2 (Fig. 51) had a rounded shape, but the others were rectangular, some nearly square.<sup>15</sup> Along the front, the towers measured a little more than 10.00 m. and their projection from the

<sup>4</sup> On defining the Pnyx Hill (Pnyx proper) and the Pnyx Range, see Thompson and Scranton (1943), 302-303. Note that while it is evident that the Compartment Wall crossed the Hill of the Nymphs (*ibid.*, 305), it is not at all clear what sort of construction, if any, took place there in the period of the White Poros Wall. The observatory atop the hill along with quarrying in the area have completely obscured the evidence here (*ibid.*, 306-307). In discussing the area immediately north of the northern end of the White Poros Wall, Scranton (*ibid.*, 342) assumes that the lack of remains of white poros there indicates that this portion of the Compartment Wall was simply repaired when the White Poros Wall was built.

<sup>5</sup> Described and discussed by Thompson and Scranton (1943), 340-358. This final excavation report is the source for the following description; it has not been thought necessary to supply specific page references for every last bit of descriptive information drawn therefrom.

<sup>6</sup> Fig. 51. Concerning the term “poros”, cf. Wycherley (1974).

<sup>7</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 341.

<sup>8</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 344, fig. 45; 345, fig. 46.

<sup>9</sup> East of the postern between towers W6 and W7 the wall is only about 1.35 m. thick, however (Thompson and Scranton (1943), 346-348).

<sup>10</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 341; also Thompson (1982), 146.

<sup>11</sup> This figure corresponds to the distance from center to center of adjacent buttresses. Note the spacing of *ca.* 3.93 m. between the centers of the buttresses along the wall’s eastern end, east of the postern between towers W6 and W7 (Fig. 52).

<sup>12</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 342.

<sup>13</sup> Thompson (1982), 146.

<sup>14</sup> The precise figure is 39.67 m. This is based on the curtain-lengths supplied by Scranton (Thompson and Scranton 1943) for W2/W3, W3/W4 and W4/W5, and my own *approximate* measurements from his illustrations, including *ca.* 35.00 m. for W1/W2 (*ibid.*, pl. XV), *ca.* 30.00 m. for W5/W6 (*ibid.*, pl. XIV) and *ca.* 53 m. for W6/W7 (*ibid.*, pl. XVI).

<sup>15</sup> Tower W5, for example, is *ca.* 8.00 by 8.50 m.; cf., on the other hand, tower W1, with dimensions of 6.60 by 9.30 m.

curtain was on average just over 9.00 m.<sup>16</sup> Tower construction, as we have it, was simple, with ashlar-block faces about 2.00 to 2.50 or more meters in width retaining cores composed of working chips and other stone material (Figs. 51-52). The outer faces of at least some towers were given a batter.<sup>17</sup>

Scranton recognizes a gate at the northern end of the White Poros Wall (Fig. 51),<sup>18</sup> and there was a postern between towers W6 and W7 (Fig. 52).<sup>19</sup> Southeast of the White Poros Wall, the main gate in the old Compartment Wall was extensively remodelled when the new portion of the diateichisma was built (Fig. 67).<sup>20</sup> Here in the saddle between the Pnyx proper and the Mouseion, the single-gated passageway through the Compartment Wall now became a double gate.<sup>21</sup> Buttresses built against the gate towers reduced the width of the passageway so that it could be closed by a second gate.

Other aspects of the White Poros Wall include both the expected and the unexpected. There exists slight evidence for a stairway behind tower W5, which would have led to the wall-walk.<sup>22</sup> Less standard would have been the “sort of fortress” at the top of the steep slope towards the wall’s eastern end (Fig. 52). This fort was enclosed by the White Poros Wall, the refurbished Compartment Wall, and a “bastion-like structure” built of conglomerate blocks.<sup>23</sup> Within this area there was, perhaps, a platform measuring 8.00 by 3.60 m. just west of tower W7.<sup>24</sup> Scranton characterizes this possible platform as “obviously an afterthought” and it was apparently not precisely contemporary with the construction of the White Poros Wall itself.<sup>25</sup>

The White Poros Wall on the Pnyx, in sum, was a skillfully-built and substantial structure. The quality of the work is clear in the great tower W2 (Figs. 51, 68), both

<sup>16</sup> The exact figures are 9.125 m. (projection) and 10.17 m. (length). These calculations are based on the figures supplied by Scranton (cf. Thompson and Scranton 1943), including dimensions of *ca.* 9.00 by 11.00 m. for the rounded tower W2. Scranton does not publish measurements for tower W4, and I have simply assigned it the same size as W3 (*ca.* 10.00 by 11.00 m.); according to Scranton (*ibid.*, 344), these two towers were “built in the same fashion”. Tower W6 projects *ca.* 9.40 m. on one flank, and 12.00 m. on the other, both of which figures were included in the calculation of average projection.

<sup>17</sup> Towers W2 and W4, at least. We cannot assume that all the towers were built in this way; Thompson and Scranton (1943), 344, for example, thought that W5 had no batter.

<sup>18</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 342. The supposed gateway would have been located between the extreme northern end of the White Poros Wall and the thickened Compartment Wall just to the east (see *ibid.*, pl. XV). There must in any case have been a gateway somewhere in this area, since a road, apparently of some importance (*ibid.*, 307), approached the wall from the city side.

<sup>19</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 348 speculate that another postern might have been located at the very eastern end of the White Poros Wall, at the point near tower C1 where that structure approached the Compartment Wall.

<sup>20</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 352-356.

<sup>21</sup> Scranton identifies the original gateway here as the “Dipylon above the Gates” of *IG II<sup>2</sup> 463*, line 53 (Thompson and Scranton (1943), 317, 334), although it had only “one actual door that could be closed” (*ibid.*, 324, contra the misleading statement *ibid.*, 317).

<sup>22</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 344.

<sup>23</sup> Scranton supposes that the conglomerate installation was originally designed to form part of a great artillery bastion, but after a change of plan, it served instead to enclose the fortress partially; see Thompson and Scranton (1943), 346, 348-352. See also Thompson (1936), 193-194, with 193, fig. 25; 194, fig. 26, for aspects of the bastion’s construction (referred to as a “tower” in the figures’ captions).

<sup>24</sup> See Thompson and Scranton (1943), 348, 351 with n. 76. In fact, according to Scranton, the structure’s identification “is not clear” (*ibid.*, 348), and the construction associated with the remains (cuttings in bedrock) might rather be identified as repairs to or strengthening of the White Poros Wall, or else as a room for storage or guards (*ibid.*, 351, n. 76).

<sup>25</sup> See Thompson and Scranton (1943), 348 on its relative chronological position.

rounded in shape and battered at the same time.<sup>26</sup> Only highly capable architects and masons could have successfully combined these features. The well-dressed blocks with carefully drafted margins at the southwestern corner of tower W7 were also the work of skillful builders.<sup>27</sup>

Also impressive was the strength of the White Poros Wall. Although the limestone forming the structure's fabric was relatively soft, it was actually more than adequate for a defensive barrier. As Scranton notes, this stone "when fresh from the quarry, is almost as soft as chalk, but when dry or after long exposure to the air, becomes reasonably firm and strong".<sup>28</sup> The efficacy of this material is evident from the fact that Athenian military engineers saw fit to use it in major fortifications. Prominent examples include the circuit wall at Piraeus and the Long Walls joining Athens and Piraeus.<sup>29</sup>

The towers in the White Poros Wall evoke the power of the new structure, most evident at tower W2.<sup>30</sup> The curtain walls between the towers were also strong, as will become clear in the final portion of this paper. Behind the curtains were buttresses so solid that they must not only have supported a wall-walk, but also have strengthened the wall.<sup>31</sup>

Note that the structure's designers took pains not only to bring the older diateichisma back into working order, but to improve upon that wall's design. In its course along the central Pnyx Range, the White Poros Wall followed the brow of the ridge more closely than had the Compartment Wall (Plan 1). Thus the approaches to the diateichisma became steeper than they had been, in accordance with the basic design principle that defensive walls ought to make optimum use of the natural contours. As well, at the time of the White Poros Wall's construction, the main passageway through the diateichisma was strengthened with the addition of a second gate.

The excavators date the White Poros Wall to the late third century B.C.<sup>32</sup> The most important evidence is the context pottery which was found among the remains of houses destroyed to make way for the new diateichisma. Scranton assigns this pottery to the late third century,<sup>33</sup> while Thompson dates it *ca.* 200.<sup>34</sup> One might, then, place the White Poros Wall's construction in the year 200 B.C. By that time, following the "Acarnanian incident" in autumn 201, hostilities between Athens and Philip V of Macedon had become likely.<sup>35</sup> The outcome of that situation was the devastation of Attica in 200.

The ongoing revisions in our Hellenistic pottery chronology, however, suggest a different interpretation of the evidence. Scranton compares five of his diagnostic ceramic finds to Hellenistic Group C.<sup>36</sup> Homer Thompson originally dated that group to the

26 Thompson and Scranton (1943), 343.

27 Thompson and Scranton (1943), 349, fig. 51.

28 Thompson and Scranton (1943), 340.

29 Von Eickstedt (1991), 18-60 (circuit at Piraeus); Conwell (1992), 291-413 (Long Walls).

30 Thompson and Scranton (1943), 338, figs. 43 and 44, 343 (referring to the tower as "magnificent").

31 So also Thompson and Scranton (1943), 341; Thompson (1982), 146. Cf. Karlsson (1992), 82.

32 Thompson and Scranton (1943), 358-362. This date is generally accepted, most recently by Karlsson (1992), 82.

33 Thompson and Scranton (1943), 358-360.

34 Thompson (1982), 146.

35 Cf. Thompson and Scranton (1943), 360. While Ferguson (1911), 268 n. 4, dates Philip's participation in the Acarnanian raid on Attica to 201, in fact Philip could not have become directly involved in the Athenian-Acarnanian conflict until spring 200, after his return from Asia (Walbank (1940), 311-312; Green (1990), 306).

36 Thompson and Scranton (1943), 360; for the finds, see *ibid.*, 359 with fig. 60. Note that Scranton thinks that the pottery on the whole is "probably a little earlier" than Group C (*ibid.*, 358), although Thompson suggests that it is not susceptible to precise dating (Thompson (1982), 146).

beginning of the second century, but Susan Rotroff now reckons that it was deposited in the period 175-150.<sup>37</sup> It is tempting to downdate the pottery — and therefore the wall. One might accordingly suggest that the White Poros Wall was not built as part of the city's preparations for conflict with Philip V of Macedon,<sup>38</sup> but rather at a later date, perhaps during the decade of animosity between Athens and the Achaean League after 166 B.C.<sup>39</sup>

There is other, non-ceramic evidence which is considered useful in dating the White Poros Wall. Scranton tentatively suggests on the basis of literary and archaeological evidence that the phase-two diateichisma had been completed by the year 200.<sup>40</sup> His excavations on the Mouseion hill demonstrate that the city circuit was out of use when the white poros tower C7 was built (Plan 1).<sup>41</sup> If the Athenian enceinte no longer enclosed the southwestern slopes of the Pnyx Range, then the Long Walls which joined the city wall at the base of the range would have been useless — and so must also have been out of service by the time tower C7 was constructed.

Scranton combines with this evidence the statement of Livy that the Long Walls between Athens and Piraeus were "half-ruined" by 200 B.C.<sup>42</sup> He posits a cause-and-effect relationship between the construction of the phase-two diateichisma and the abandonment of the southwestern city wall together with the Long Walls. Scranton thus assumes that these other fortifications had begun deteriorating when the new diateichisma was built. That the Long Walls were half-ruined in the year 200 would mean that this second-phase diateichisma had rendered them out of service before this time.

The white poros tower C7 on the Mouseion may well serve as evidence that the southwestern circuit at Athens was given up with the construction of the refurbished diateichisma. Yet this need have had nothing to do with the fate of the Long Walls, which had begun falling into ruins long before the advent of the White Poros Wall. In fact they had probably ceased functioning from about 300 B.C., and were certainly out of use by the end of the Chremonidean War in 261.<sup>43</sup> That the deterioration of the Long Walls was

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The sherds, in any case, are no longer available for study (Pnyx excavation notebook VIII, 1730 [the notebook was kindly made available to me at the Stoa of Attalos by Ms. Jan Jordan, and is referred to here courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens]).

<sup>37</sup> Rotroff (1987), 6.

<sup>38</sup> The character of the structure also suggests that we sever the connection with the threat from Philip V. In 200, once the relationship between Philip and the Athenians went sour, events moved quickly; there would have been little time to build fortifications, while the White Poros Wall exhibits no sign of hasty construction. My thanks to Dr. Judith Binder for pointing this out to me (pers. comm., 9 October and 22 October 1994).

<sup>39</sup> See Ferguson (1911), 323-328.

<sup>40</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 360.

<sup>41</sup> Thompson and Scranton (1943), 357. C7 is the tower in the southwestern corner of the circuit on the Mouseion Hill.

<sup>42</sup> Livy XXXI.26.8.

<sup>43</sup> Conwell (1992), 153-158. Note that the Compartment Wall's construction may not have occasioned the abandonment of the Long Walls (cf. also Thompson and Scranton (1943), 337, 340). The Long Walls were reconditioned in 307-304 (Conwell (1992), 141-146). The Compartment Wall was begun (according to the original reading of the pottery) in the later fourth century. These two projects of fortification would hardly have run concurrently if the latter was intended to render the former obsolete. The early Hellenistic pottery chronology, however, is presently undergoing revision. Pending the definitive publication of the new, lower chronology, it may be that the Compartment Wall was not begun at the end of the fourth century. Thompson and Scranton (1943), 333 cite parallels between context pottery associated with that wall and Agora Groups A and B as well as the latest pottery at Olynthos. Rotroff (1987), 6 now dates the deposition of Groups A (lower fill) and B to ca. 260 and ca. 240, respectively, while she suspects that the Olynthos pottery also includes at least some material which should be dated later than it has been hitherto (Rotroff

well-advanced in the year 200, then, indicates nothing about the current status of defenses on the Pnyx.

Finally, some identify useful chronological evidence in the inscription *IG II<sup>2</sup> 834*, where lines 15-16 record the repair of Athens' defenses.<sup>44</sup> Now dated *ca.* 215 by Habicht,<sup>45</sup> this document honors the statesman Eurykleides for his accomplishments on behalf of Athens. It is typically — and rightly — thought that the fortification work with which he was associated would have occurred soon after 229.<sup>46</sup> In this year, Athens regained her independence after decades of Macedonian control. Restoring the city's defenses was precisely the sort of realistic measure a newly independent government would quickly undertake. One should not necessarily assume, however, that the phase-two *diateichisma* belongs to the work with which Eurykleides was associated, since the earliest date allowed by the pottery is *ca.* 200.<sup>47</sup>

Built during the mid-Hellenistic period, in any case, the White Poros Wall was not quite on the cusp of Hellenistic fortification design, even if it displays advances on its predecessor. The two different sorts of towers, generally orthogonal but for one example with a curving face, had both been known in Greek fortifications for centuries. Towers were typically rectangular, and even with the proliferation of rounded and multi-sided towers in Hellenistic times, rectangular towers were still built regularly.<sup>48</sup> Rounded towers occurred already in Archaic times.<sup>49</sup>

Even the mix of rounded and orthogonal towers was normal by the fifth century.<sup>50</sup> Placing a rounded tower at an important angle in a fortification wall, like tower W2 in the White Poros Wall, was a regular feature of both Classical and Hellenistic fortifications.<sup>51</sup> And while the towers were substantial in size, averaging about 9.00 by 10.00 m., they were nevertheless hardly larger than some towers of earlier times, like Aigosthena tower A, at 8.90 m. per side,<sup>52</sup> and fell short of various impressive Hellenistic examples, such as the southern tower of the Upper Gate of Acrocorinth, at about 12.75 m. per side.<sup>53</sup> Finally, in Hellenistic times towers tended to occur at shorter intervals along the curtains than before, but the distance of some 40.00 m. between the towers in the White Poros Wall was not particularly short.<sup>54</sup>

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(1990), 176). In fact, Thompson (1982), 146, n. 44 now suggests that a "considerable down-dating" of at least a part of the Compartment Wall may be necessary; see also Romano (1985), 452-453.

<sup>44</sup> Maier (1959), 80; Habicht (1982), 122 n. 22.

<sup>45</sup> Habicht (1982), 120-124.

<sup>46</sup> Ferguson (1911), 237; Thompson and Scranton (1943), 360; Maier (1959), 79. This would be confirmed if, as Habicht (1982), 119 believes, the activities are listed in chronological order. The reference to Eurykleides' work on the fortifications immediately follows a reference to his role in freeing the city in 229.

<sup>47</sup> See also Thompson and Scranton (1943), 360.

<sup>48</sup> Winter (1971), 191-193; Lawrence (1979), 378.

<sup>49</sup> Winter (1971), 192; Lawrence (1979), 378-379. According to Winter (1971), 194, during the Hellenistic period, rounded towers "do not appear to have been relatively any more frequent" than in previous times.

<sup>50</sup> Winter (1971), 194.

<sup>51</sup> Winter (1971), 194-195.

<sup>52</sup> See Ober (1987), 587. Ober (1987), 586 dates the circuit at Aigosthena *ca.* 343; Winter (1971), 142, n. 56, however, dates the walls after 300, and Lawrence (1979), 388-389 attributed them to Demetrios Poliorketes.

<sup>53</sup> Winter (1991), 113; see Winter (1991), 118-119 on dating the tower, once attributed to Demetrios Poliorketes, but now placed by Winter in the later third century.

<sup>54</sup> The sloping, sometimes steep local topography was doubtless thought to render closer spacing unnecessary.

All this is not to suggest, however, that the White Poros Wall was not built with an eye to surviving the sorts of offensive threats current in the middle of the Hellenistic period. The towers, if not the grandest on record, were nevertheless quite large, surely in order to carry plenty of defensive artillery.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the formidable construction of the towers' foundations evokes their builders' awareness of the powerful threats from current siege-techniques. The towers' impressive size and tremendous strength, in contrast to the less substantial power of the curtains, demonstrates the preeminence granted towers since the introduction of siege artillery in the fourth century.<sup>56</sup>

The curtains in the White Poros Wall, if less imposing than the towers, were massive nevertheless. As already noted, the curtain walls were solid-block constructions, their entire width composed of ashlar masonry.<sup>57</sup> This feature identifies the White Poros Wall as unusual, generally-speaking, since Greek fortification walls were customarily in-filled constructions.<sup>58</sup> Athenian builders, however, did not observe the rule; at and near Athens, solid-block built fortification walls enjoyed a long history.

According to Thucydides, the city circuit built at Piraeus after the Persian Wars was made completely of blocks.<sup>59</sup> The solid-block, so-called "Perikleian" *peribolos* and retaining wall at Eleusis dates to the fifth century as well.<sup>60</sup> During the fourth century, solid-block construction became more prevalent in and around Athens. Earlier on in the

<sup>55</sup> If these "towers" are instead thought of as bastions (cf. above, p. 94), they would serve to buttress a suggestion by Marsden (1969), 145: "we may possibly suspect that, about the middle of the third century, some designers were beginning to favour the abandonment of high, but relatively flimsy, artillery-towers and the introduction of low bastions with powerful walls."

<sup>56</sup> Winter (1971), 167; cf. also McNicoll (1986), 312 on the "concentration of firepower" during Hellenistic times.

<sup>57</sup> One might object that to consider this fortification a solid-block structure is misguided — since the blocks of either face met one another within the wall, the structure is a "solid-block" construction simply due to the fact that its builders had exerted the minimum effort necessary to create a wall. Yet the White Poros Wall could certainly have been built as an in-filled structure, and this with a good deal less trouble. The builders could have formed each face from blocks placed as stretchers, filling the space between the faces with other materials. In the two-meter-wide White Poros Wall, in which the blocks are about 65 cm. in width, the space to be filled would have been some 70 cm. wide. The time and expense in cutting and fitting blocks would have been considerably reduced had the wall's designers opted for an in-filled construction. Moreover, abundant material for in-filling was immediately at hand, what with the remnants of the old Compartment Wall adjacent to its replacement, and the spolia from a number of buildings apparently destroyed to make way for the new *diateichisma*. In the excavation trenches alone there were four instances in which structures were removed from the course of the wall (Thompson and Scranton (1943), 342-345).

<sup>58</sup> Maier (1961), 105; Tomlinson (1961), 139; Martin (1965), 376; Orlandos (1968), 124-125; Winter (1971), 70, n. 3, 135, 136; Lawrence (1979), 214, 302; Karlsson (1992), 68.

<sup>59</sup> Thuc. I.93.5. That Thucydides referred to solid-block walls is emphasized by von Eickstedt (1991), 25, n. 89. There are numerous stretches of solid-block walls in the extant remains of fortifications at Piraeus, but identifying which of these belong to the city's Themistoklean wall remains a dubious enterprise. Among the various known stretches of solid-block walls in Piraeus, one at the west side of the entrance to Zea Harbor is frequently associated with this first phase of Piraeus' *enceinte*; see Tsirivakos (1968), 113-114; Fraser (1968/69), 6; Garland (1987), 164; von Eickstedt (1991), 26. The initial phase of the Asty Gate might be Themistoklean; see Judeich (1931), 152; Scranton (1941), 119, 176, D2, no. 26; Garland (1987), 164, 166; von Eickstedt (1991), 57. Hornblower (1991), 138 assigns to Themistokles a solid-block section on the east side of Akte, presently visible in the Maritime Museum.

<sup>60</sup> Noack (1927), 185-188, pls. 41a/c; Travlos (1988), 140 figs. 165-166. On dating the wall, see Wrede (1933), 16, no. 37-39; Scranton (1941), 112, 176, D2, no. 11. Whether the "Perikleian" structure was a solid-block construction to the very top or had a mudbrick superstructure is still unresolved; see Noack (1927), 187-188; Wrede, *loc. cit.*; Winter (1971), 158, n. 25, Lawrence (1979), 206.

century, a fortress at Phyle was built with solid-stone walls.<sup>61</sup> The mid-fourth-century peribolos and retaining wall at the south side of the Demeter sanctuary in Eleusis was also a solid-block construction.<sup>62</sup>

During the second half of the fourth century, solid-block fortifications were notably popular. The walls of the fort at Myoupolis (ancient Oinoe) were made up of coursed ashlar blocks.<sup>63</sup> There were plans in 337/6 to rebuild a round tower at Mounychia in the solid-block technique,<sup>64</sup> although the project was perhaps never realized.<sup>65</sup> An inscription dating from 329/8 calls for the reconstruction at Eleusis of a tower in the same form of construction;<sup>66</sup> a solid-block tower excavated in the so-called “Peisistrateian” peribolos there has long been recognized as the one with which the inscription was concerned.<sup>67</sup>

In Athens the reconstruction of the Dipylon Gate with a core of conglomerate blocks occurred in the years after 307.<sup>68</sup> Many other stretches of the Asty's enceinte were also built solidly of conglomerate blocks.<sup>69</sup> These are regularly ascribed to the fourth century, often with no more specific date. On occasion, stratigraphic or other evidence is thought to place them either immediately after the battle of Chaironeia in 338,<sup>70</sup> or at the end of the century.<sup>71</sup> The dating of these portions of the Athenian city wall remains uncertain, and Maier correctly suggests that they could even date to the third century instead of the fourth.<sup>72</sup> Whatever their actual date may be, these remains are prominent reminders of the importance of solid-block fortification walls at Athens.

<sup>61</sup> See Wrede (1924), 172. The stones of the core, while disposed in courses essentially corresponding with those of the faces, were rather roughly shaped compared to most of the walls cited in the present discussion. On the fort's date, see most recently Munn (1993), 9, n. 16, 168, suggesting *ca.* 378-375. Cooper (1986), 195 dates the fortress shortly before 334.

<sup>62</sup> Noack (1927), 203-205, pl. 42a. The structure's date is debated. Munn (1993), 7, n. 8 suggests the 370s or 360s, Mylonas (1961), 131-133 and Travlos (1988), 95 favor 370/60, and others place it later in the fourth century, including Scranton (1941), 123-130, 178, D4, no. 3 (330s) and Wrede (1933), 21-22, no. 53, 29, no. 71 (350-325).

<sup>63</sup> Wrede (1933), 25-26, no. 59; Ober (1985), 154-155, no. 4b.

<sup>64</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 244, lines 81-98 (on the inscription's date, see Conwell (1992), 129-130). It is certain from lines 47-48 that these specifications applied to a project in Mounychia, while lines 87-90 demonstrate that the solid-stone work was to be in cut blocks (cf. *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1666b, lines 57-58, 63-64 on the Prostoon at Eleusis).

<sup>65</sup> A tower excavated by Threpsiades on Mounychia (Threpsiades (1935), 160-164; Travlos (1988), 350, fig. 431; von Eickstedt (1991), 48) may well be the one referred to in this inscription (Maier (1959), 18, 46-47; von Eickstedt (1991), 49). If so, its in-filled construction demonstrates that the builders did not follow the specifications (von Eickstedt (1991), 49, n. 213; cf. Maier (1959), 47).

<sup>66</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1672, line 48.

<sup>67</sup> For the tower itself, as well as its association with the one mentioned in the inscription, see Noack (1927), 184, 187, 211-214 (Tower D3); Kourouniotes (1933/35), 41-48 (Tower H21); Maier (1959), 101-102 (Tower F).

<sup>68</sup> Gruben (1970), 125-126; Knigge (1988), 40, 50, 69-71, with description of the remains, Knigge (1988), 70-72.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Judeich (1931), 134; Vanderpool (1958), 321; Philippaki (1966), 55-57, no. 1; Alexandri (1967), 70, no. 24, 79-83, no. 33, 106-108, no. 61; Alexandri (1968), 102-105; Alexandri (1969), 28-31, no. 10, 41, no. 17; Alexandri (1973), 36-37, no. 20. Maier (1959), 16 lists further examples.

<sup>70</sup> See, for instance, Alexandri (1968), 105.

<sup>71</sup> For example, Alexandri (1969), 31. Cf. also Maier (1959), 16, on a solid-block tower near the Piraeus Gate at Athens.

<sup>72</sup> See Maier (1959), 16, 19, 67 suggesting possible dates of 337/6, 307/6 or the third century. I am grateful to Dr. Judith Binder for an informative discussion on 31 August 1994, in the course of which I learned a great deal about issues involved in dating the conglomerate portions of the city circuit at Athens.

Like the Athenian circuit, the remains of Piraeus' enceinte include numerous examples of solid-block construction.<sup>73</sup> Some of these can be dated with confidence. In the Asty Gate's second phase, drafted blocks of poros, or Piraeus limestone, masked a core of conglomerate blocks. This phase of the gate should be approximately similar in date to the late-fourth-century Dipylon Gate in the Kerameikos at Athens,<sup>74</sup> given the marked similarity in both construction and masonry style.<sup>75</sup> A solid-block curtain-wall bonding with the phase-two Asty Gate on the west would be of the same date, as also — perhaps — the other solid-block stretches in the landward portion of Piraeus' circuit wall.<sup>76</sup>

Solid-block construction, then, had a long history in and around Athens, so that the White Poros Wall was perfectly at home.<sup>77</sup> It is natural to wonder why the Athenians relied so often on solid-block construction for more than three centuries. What most impresses the observer about a wall built in this technique is its evident strength and internal stability. The Athenians perhaps favored this form of construction in order to compensate for the softness of the stone, whether conglomerate or so-called "poros", which they regularly employed in their fortification walls.<sup>78</sup>

The White Poros Wall, in sum, was a powerful structure, but one which was economically built. Although Athens experienced an economic revival after regaining her independence in 229 B.C., the city had no hope of regaining the prosperity which had facilitated the great building projects of previous times.<sup>79</sup> The construction of a new defensive structure, however, would have been undertaken only if it was believed that the result would prove solid enough to withstand at least a substantial assault. Built during the second quarter of the second century B.C., the White Poros Wall was not lavish in its dimensions and was made of a stone easily cut, yet it was capably built and strong. Even if Athens no longer possessed a leading place in Mediterranean affairs by the time the phase-two diateichisma was built on the Pnyx, the city's distinguished architectural tradition lived on.

<sup>73</sup> In addition to the examples listed here, see above, n. 59.

<sup>74</sup> See above, n. 68 for sources concerning the date of the early Hellenistic Dipylon Gate.

<sup>75</sup> Wrede (1933), 22-23, no. 54: "Der reine Steinbau führt in nachkonzonische Zeit, die absolute Übereinstimmung in Anlage, Quadermaassen und Arbeitsart mit dem Dipylon zweifellos auf Gleichzeitigkeit mit diesem." Cf., however, Judeich (1931), 152 with n. 1; Maier (1959), 19; von Eickstedt (1991), 60 with n. 246. Recent photographs of the gate can be found in von Eickstedt (1991), 59, figs. 35 and 36 and a drawing at *ibid.*, 57, fig. 32.

<sup>76</sup> For this stretch of Piraeus' enceinte, see von Alten (1881), 15-20; Judeich (1931), 144-145, 145-146, 148; von Eickstedt (1991), 50-60. Some scholars mistakenly assert that the *entire* surviving city wall on this side of Piraeus was built in the solid-block technique (Maier (1959), 18-19; Garland (1987), 166).

<sup>77</sup> The conglomerate "bastion-like structure" already discussed (above, p. 95 with n. 23) emphasizes the continued currency of solid-block construction at the time the White Poros Wall was built.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. above p. 96 with n. 29.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Ferguson (1911), 246-48.

# General Bibliography

References to ancient authors in the Proceedings follow the abbreviations of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*<sup>2</sup>, with occasional expansion for clarity. The references to modern literature follow the Harvard system, giving only the author's name and the date of publication in the footnotes, whereas the full bibliographical references are printed in this bibliography. All abbreviations of serials in this bibliography follow the system used in *The American Journal of Archaeology* 95 (1991), 1-16.

In addition the following abbreviations have been used in the Proceedings:

*IG* = *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Berlin 1873-

*I.Iasos* = *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasiens 28.1-28.2. Die Inschriften von Iasos I-II*, Bonn 1985.

*I.Ephesos* = *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasiens 11.1-17.4. Die Inschriften von Ephesos I-VIII*, Bonn 1979-1984.

*SEG* = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Leiden 1923-

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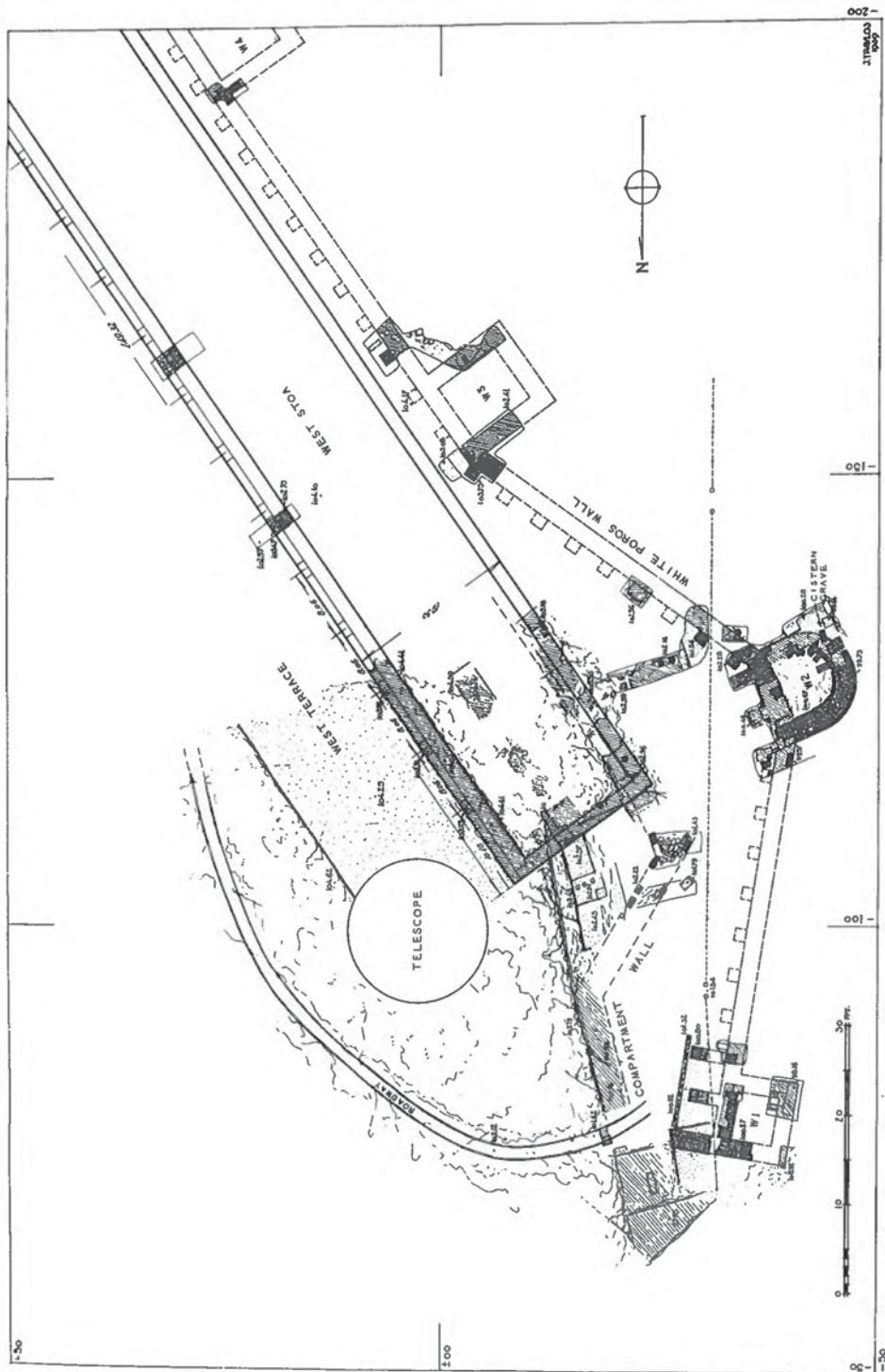


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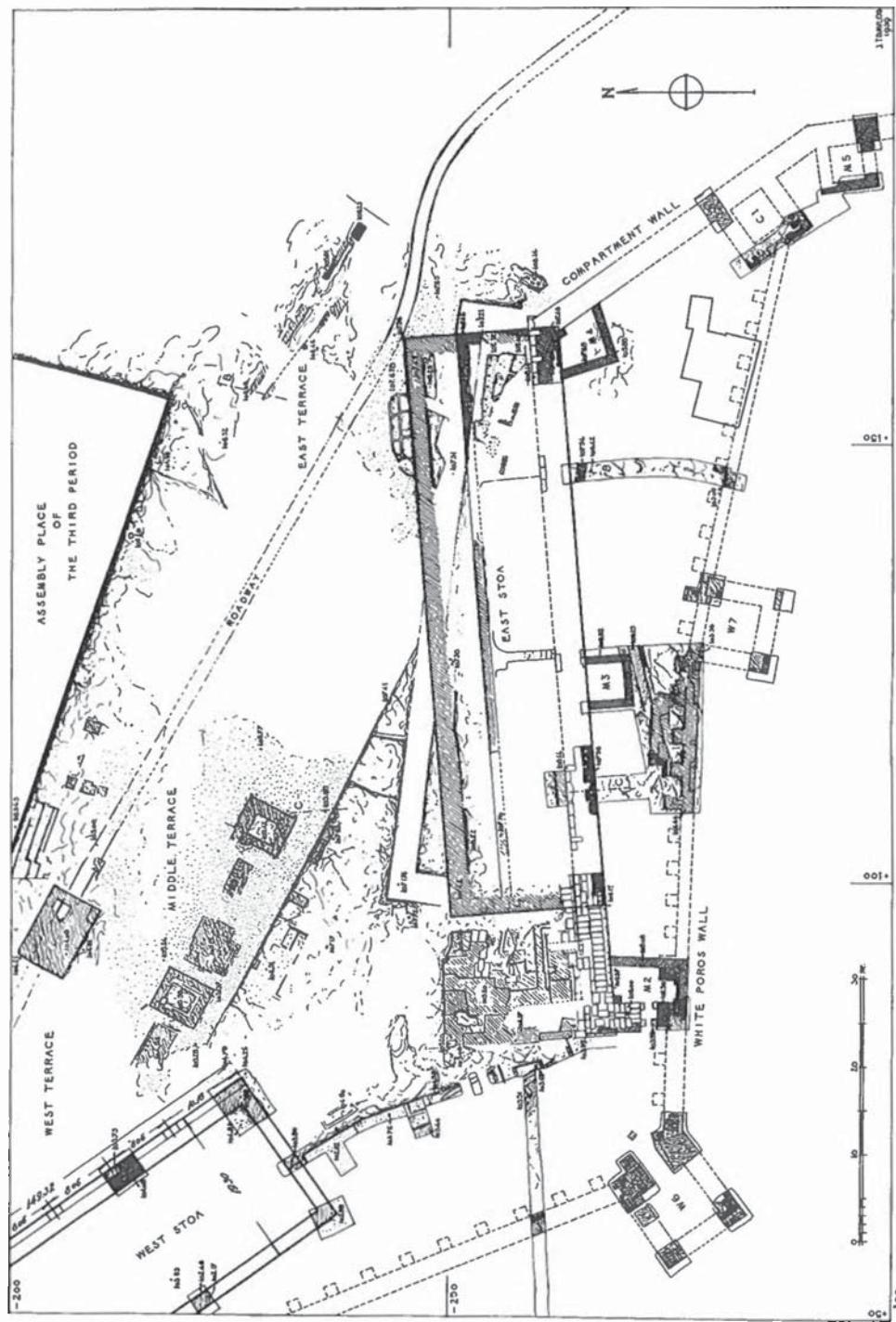


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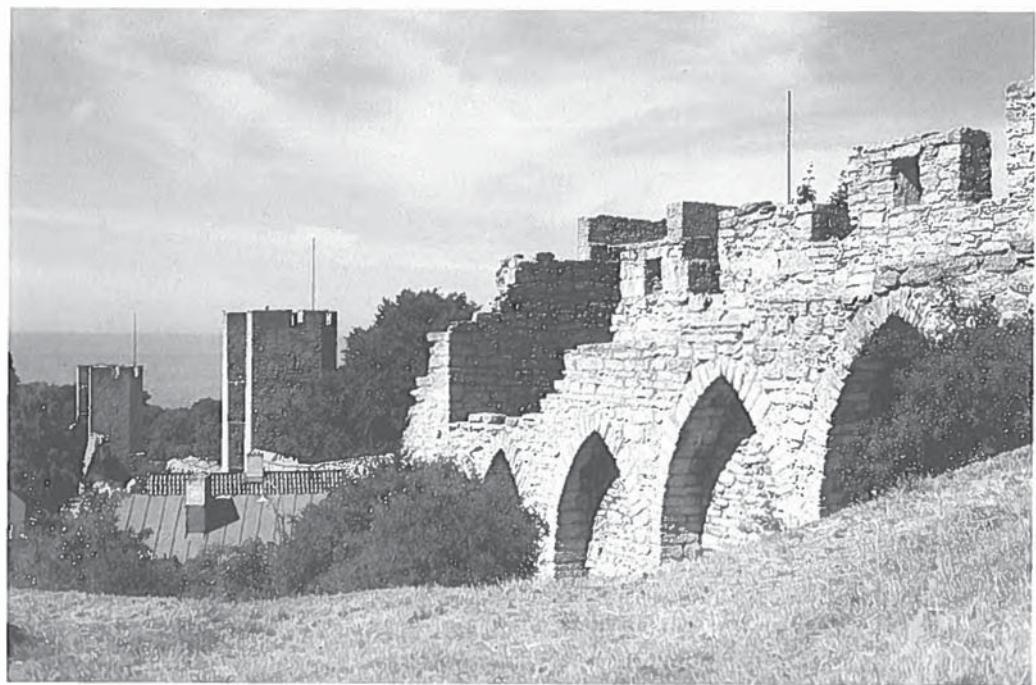


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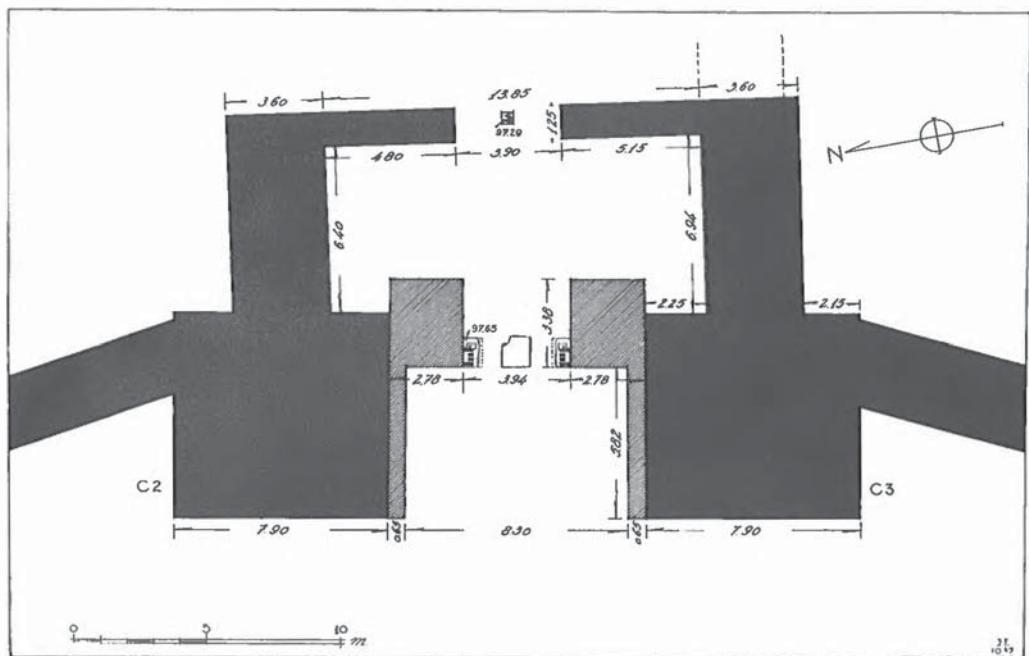


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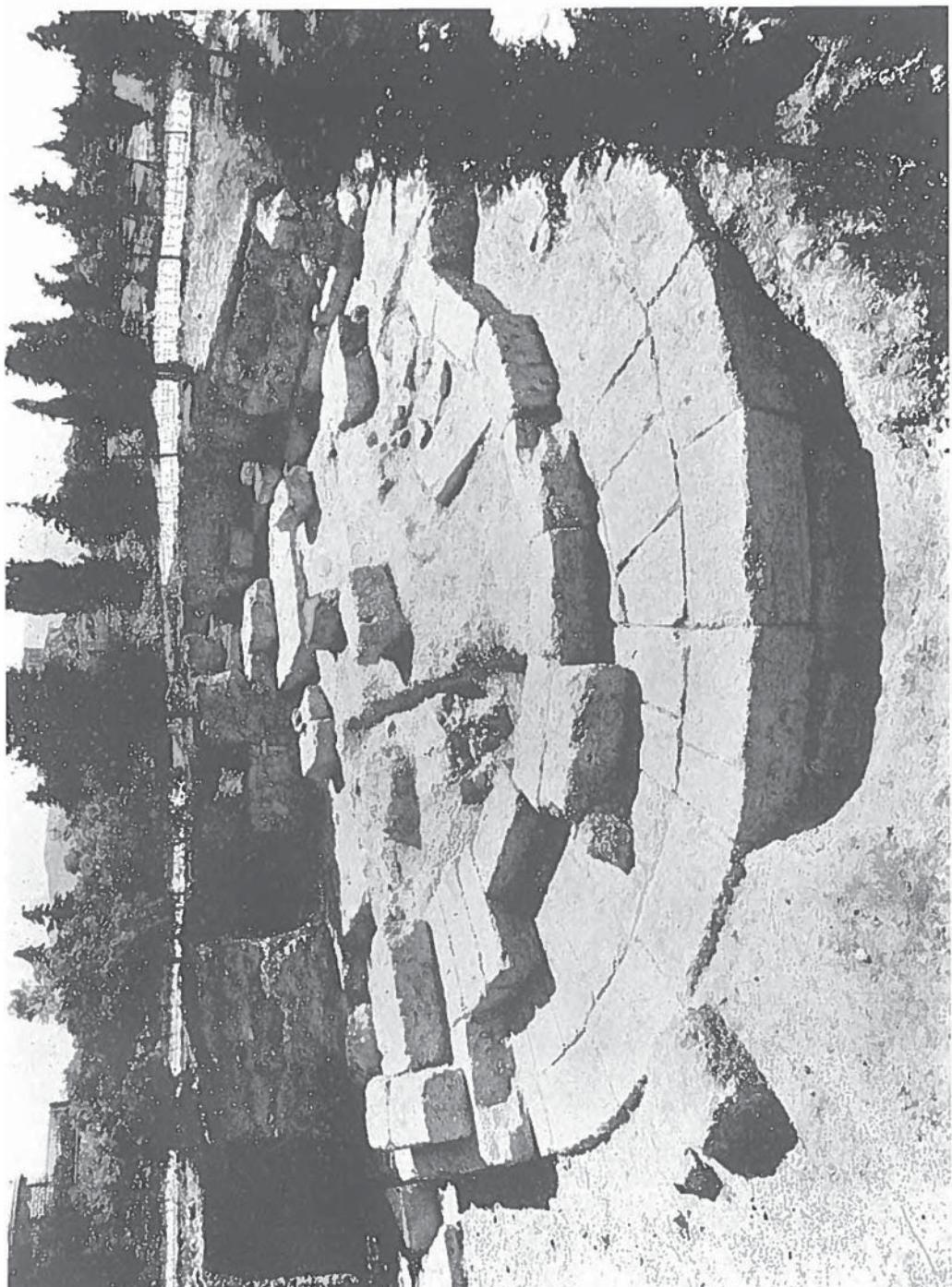
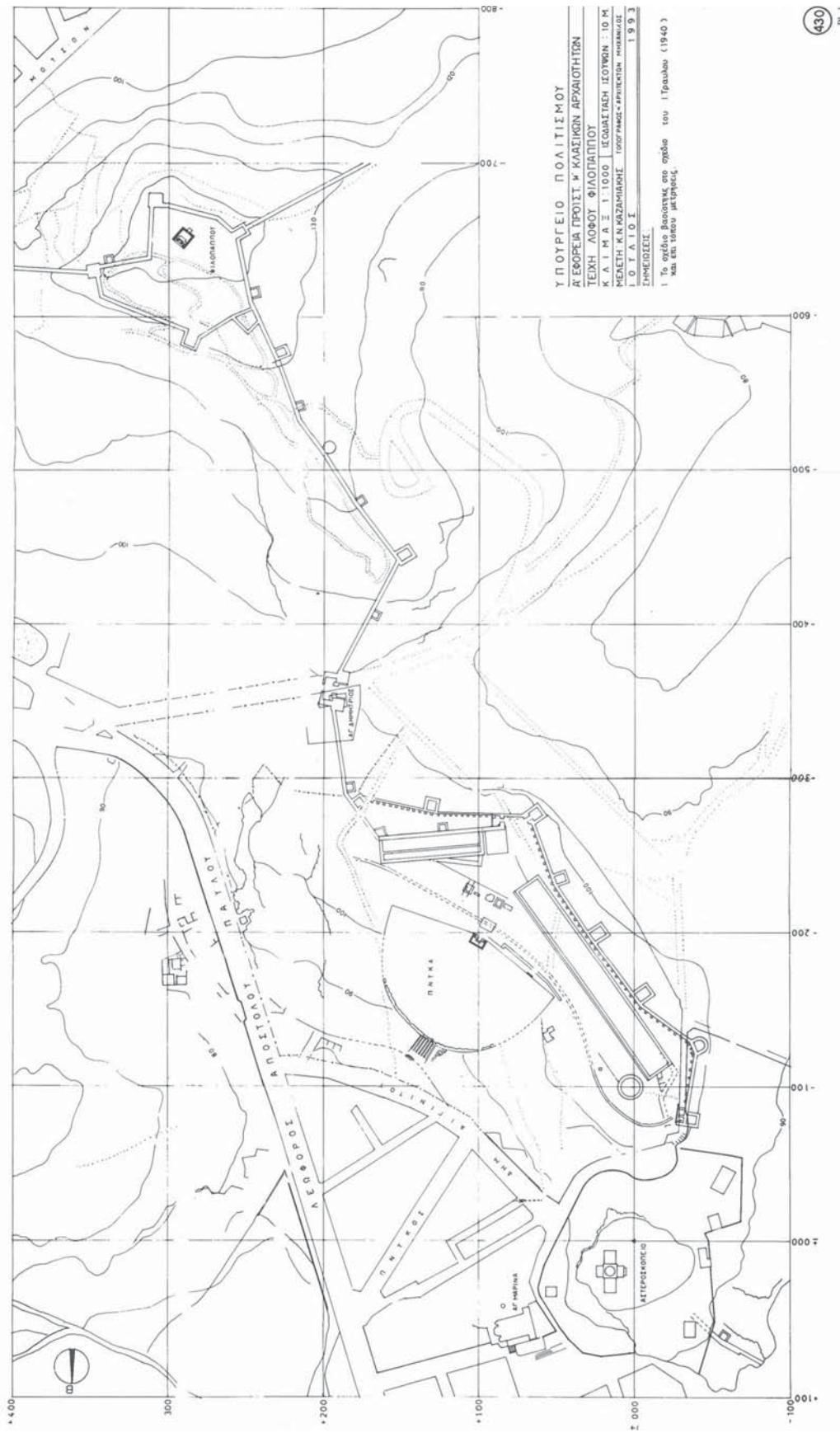


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