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KLEON'S WALL

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON AN OLD PROBLEM

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The association by Aristophanes in two lines of the *Knights*² of some fortification works by Kleon, and the subsequent comments of the scholiast, generated a topographical debate on the location of this wall. The problem was confronted by opposing the archaeological evidence to the literary record, not by combining them in a broader analysis. The aim of this paper is to explore all the evidence on Athenian fortifications at the time Kleon was politically active. Through a careful analysis of all the city defences of the period and the references in Aristophanes and other contemporary sources, two different questions will be addressed: first, is Aristophanes really referring to the construction of a specific wall? And, secondly, if this first hypothesis is accepted, where was it located?

Introduction: Text as Archaeological Evidence

While archaeology has denied the existence of the wall mentioned by Aristophanes, philology has considered it to be a metaphor of the division of the citizens that the demagogue was causing in Athens. Those are the expected results of confronting both kinds of evidence instead of considering them part of the same archaeological record. A complete analysis of the debate about the role of texts in archaeological research is out of the scope of this paper, but it is important to mention briefly that, for several scholars, texts have traditionally conditioned the archaeological research and interpretation in Hellenic Archaeology. Snodgrass,³ Small⁴ and Whitley⁵ have pointed out the problem caused by the use of textual evidence as the framework in which archaeology must fit and fill the gaps. For example, in the study produced by Ian Morris on the cemeteries of Athens, only historical data is considered to be able to provide a model for social structure,⁶ despite the

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² 'σὺ δ' Ἀθηναίους ἐζήτησας μικροπολίτας ἀποφῆναι διατεχίζων καὶ χρησιμωδῶν, ὁ Θεμιστοκλεῖ ἀντιφερίζων.' Aristophanes *Knights* 817-818; Sommerstein 1981.

³ Snodgrass 1983; 1987.

⁴ Small 1995a.

⁵ Whitley 2001.

⁶ Morris 1992.

fact that textual evidence is no more than another dependent variable of the total record.⁷ In a similar theoretical position, Dyson concludes that 'Classical' archaeologists have traditionally granted to the philologists and ancient historians the central position in the realm of text study.⁸

'Kleon's *diateichisma*': History of the Research

In order to understand the different interpretations for the *diateichisma* it is necessary to review the works that have addressed this topic. Although the interest in the circuit walls of Athens can be traced back to the topographers of the early twentieth century, the lack of conspicuous surface remains made the execution of archaeological excavations in different parts of the city necessary. The excavations of the German School at Athens under the direction of F. Noack, who excavated the area of the *Dypilon*, are an early example of this. The results of these works are important for the understanding of the *diateichisma* since, for the first time, they pointed out the need for meticulous excavation for the study of the construction and repairs of the circuits, not always attested in the literary record.⁹ More important for this work was Judeich's study of the topography of Athens, which included a section on the walls of the city.¹⁰ It is here where, by following Aristophanes,¹¹ the author identifies the *diateichisma* with the wall of Kleon.

This identification was the prevailing one until the publication of the excavations of the Pnyx in 1943.¹² Before this excavation, we find several authors referring to this section of the city defences as Kleon's wall. Thompson and Kourouniotes in 1932, when analysing the foundation of the podium of Meton's *heliotropion*, associated it to its proximity with the city walls, which the authors identify as Kleon's *diateichisma*.¹³ It is interesting to consider the chronological framework for this interpretation, by following a scholiast on Aristophanes,¹⁴ they dated the erection of this podium and the sundial in 433/432 BCE, and eloquently pointed out that the expression took:

⁷ Small 1995b: 171-172.

⁸ Dyson 1995: 27.

⁹ Noack 1907, 1908; Paton 1907a, 1907b.

¹⁰ Judeich 1931: 113-165.

¹¹ Aristophanes *Knights* 817-818; Sommerstein 1981.

¹² Thompson and Scranton 1943.

¹³ Kourouniotes and Thompson 1932: 211.

¹⁴ Aristophanes *Birds* 997; Henderson 2000.

[...] the neuter noun τό τεῖχος to refer to a fortification wall, as it regularly does, rather than to the wall of a building which is ordinarily designated as ὁ τοῖχος.¹⁵

In consequence it seems that the authors are defending the existence of a fortification wall in the area of the Pnyx in the time Kleon was politically active.

The *diateichisma* was analysed again in a paper by Thompson in 1936. He published the crucial information for the first dating of the wall. The layout of the curtain crossed the south foundation of the Long Stoa, approaching it at an angle of 130° and matching the corner of the stoa perfectly in its outer face.¹⁶ From this point the curtain wall turns 90° north creating a corner protected by a tower. Thompson's paper was the first to date the wall later than the fifth century BCE, although the date suggested is too late. The author considered that the constant traffic of carts on the surface packed the soil of the area distorting the dates, and he therefore relied only on the artefacts found inside the trench and wall fillings.¹⁷ Thompson did not properly address at this time the formation processes of the archaeological context and dated the wall to the first century CE, in 'Hadrianic' times, mentioning even the possibility of dating it to the Late Roman Empire, under Valerian, Julian or Justinian.¹⁸

This chronology was reviewed in 1943, when Thompson and Scranton published the paper that defined the most extended interpretation of this wall. The title of this work, *Stoas and City Walls on the Pnyx*,¹⁹ explains by itself the reason for the new date on the *diateichisma*. The authors considered that the short campaigns in the area in the years 1932 and 1934 caused some problems of interpretation, so further exploration was carried out in 1936 and 1937.²⁰ This research was also the main source of information for a paper by Scranton about the Athenian defences before the Peloponnesian War,²¹ although the

¹⁵ Kourouniotes and Thompson 1932: 211.

¹⁶ Thompson 1936: 192.

¹⁷ Thompson 1936: 196, 198

¹⁸ Schiffer 1995, 2010; Thompson 1936: 198-200.

¹⁹ Thompson and Scranton 1943.

²⁰ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 270.

²¹ Scranton 1938.

diateichisma is only mentioned to clarify some topographical debates on the layout of the Long Walls as established by Judeich.²² The summer excavation seasons of 1936 and 1937 took place at several points along the Pnyx ridge. The layout was described by Thompson and Scranton as follows:

This wall was traced southward from a point on the northwest spur of the Hill of the Nymphs. It was found to pass over the foundations of the West Stoa on the Pnyx, and to cross the unfinished foundations of the East Stoa. In the col between the Central Pnyx and the Museum Hill it was broken by a double gate, from which it ascended the ridge of the Museum to the peak.²³

The results of the excavations showed five major periods of construction in this wall.²⁴

- a) A first period based on the traces of several buildings of the Pnyx, previous to the construction of the curtain.
- b) A wall along the entire range, denominated Compartment Wall (see figure 1).
- c) An extensive modification and repair of the Compartment Wall, denominated White Poros Wall, dated to the late third century BCE, and associated with the repairs of Eurikleides and Mykion.
- d) Repairs of Roman times, in the second century CE.
- e) Repairs of Late Roman times, denominated Mortar repairs, in the third century CE, possibly during the reign of Valerian.

The Compartment Wall received its name from the construction technique used in its erection. The wall consisted of ashlar orthostates disposed alternating two stretchers and one header, enclosing a mass of rubble and earth packing; this building technique was denominated *emplekto*. The average width of the curtain is 3m, although in the best preserved section, that close to the east side of the East Stoa (see figure 2), the orthostates measured 1.35m. in length, 0.65m. in height, and 0.48-0.50m. in thickness. The blocks were well cut and carefully jointed with a band of *anathyrosis* about 0.10m wide

²² Judeich 1938: 529.

²³ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 303.

²⁴ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 302-303.

along the outer joint surface.²⁵

The evidence for the dating of the wall was classified by Thompson and Scranton as literary, epigraphical and ceramic.²⁶ In a house destroyed to make way for the wall in the area of the *Dypilon* above the Gates, pottery dating to the middle of the fourth century BCE was found under the floor, providing a *terminus post quem* for the first phase of the wall. The same type of pottery has been found in the fillings of the wall in the four sections excavated in more detail, with sherds of the middle and late fourth century BCE recorded.²⁷ However, the definitive evidence was provided by the stratigraphic relationship between the wall and the West Stoa. The life of this structure is considered brief, being destroyed shortly after its erection. Since the structure presented a clearer archaeological context, it has been more confidently dated than the *diateichisma*, around 325 BCE. It was destroyed to make space for the curtain wall, and its foundation cut by the trench of the *diateichisma*. Therefore, the erection of the defensive line cannot be earlier than 325 BCE.²⁸

The earliest epigraphic record is a Decree of 307-306 BCE (IGII² 463) on the repairs of the Circuit Walls of Athens, which in line 53 mentions explicitly both the *diateichisma* and the *Dypilon* above the Gates, from where the modern names of the structures are borrowed.²⁹ These two dates refuted the traditional interpretation which attributed its construction to Kleon, around 425 BCE. Although they are going to receive further attention later on, here I shall explain the traditional interpretation of the scholars at this time. The Sausage-seller accuses Paphlagonian (Kleon), of pretending to make the Athenians *mikropoliteis* (small or second-class citizens), by building up a *diateichisma*.³⁰ This evidence was used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to denominate the *diateichisma* 'Kleon's Wall' Thompson and Scranton's excavations demonstrated that this identification is impossible if we take into account the stratigraphic sequence exposed. Thus, Judeich's identification

²⁵ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 303-304.

²⁶ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 333.

²⁷ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 333-334.

²⁸ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 334.

²⁹ For a more detail description of the stele see Woodhead 1997. The text has preserved poorly even after excavated (the author does not indicate the reasons) but fragments on the wall and its different gates are still readable (Woodhead 1997:173; col. 1-3).

³⁰ Judeich 1931: 161. The rivalry between Aristophanes and Kleon is well attested, See Sommerstein 1981: 31-34 for a synthesis of this relationship with regards to *The Knights*.

was rejected, and a new denomination, *diateichisma*, was borrowed from the decree of 307-306 BCE.

Subsequent works have explored the function of this wall. In two classic works on Greek fortifications, both Winter³¹ and Lawrence³² considered that the reduction of the perimeter of the Athenian circuit wall was related to the shortage of manpower in Athens after the defeat at Chaeronea, as well as the development of siege warfare during the fourth century BCE, which required further improvement and investment on the circuits.

Further publications have dated the wall to even more recent times. Thompson returned to the topic in 1982 and dated the wall to around 200 BCE, maybe in anticipation of the possible assault of Philip V in the summer of that year.³³ Conwell dated the wall around 300-280 BCE and this chronology is then followed by Theodoraki in the most recent synthesis of the defences of Athens.³⁴ The author establishes fifteen phases in the development of the circuit walls. The *diateichisma* excavated by Thompson and Scranton would be dated to the third century BCE (figure 3).³⁵ The reason for this date is the erection of the so-called Macedonian fortress. This structure, located in the hill of the Muses, presents the same *emplekto* masonry style as the *diateichisma*, and sections of the wall seem to imbricate with the fortress.³⁶ This fact was already considered by Thompson and Scranton, although they argued that there was no reason to believe it was built by the troops of Demetrios Poliorcetes.³⁷

Two main conclusions are derived from this brief synthesis. First, if the excavated *diateichisma* is finally dated to between 300 and 280 BCE, the repairs recorded in the Decree of 307-306 BCE cannot refer any longer to the white *poros* phase as defined by Thompson and Scranton,³⁸ but only to a previous wall also denominated *diateichisma*. No remains of an earlier phase than the Compartment Wall have been recorded, so this decree may refer to a defensive line of which we still have no material evidence.

³¹ Winter 1971: 59.

³² Lawrence 1979: 151.

³³ Thompson 1982: 146.

³⁴ Conwell 2008: 178-182; Theodoraki 2011: 84, 125.

³⁵ Theodoraki 2011: 125.

³⁶ Pausanias 1.25.8, Herrero-Ingelmo 1994.

³⁷ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 337.

³⁸ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 302.

All these chronological debates, however, do not solve the second part of the problem. Whatever the date of the erection of the *diateichisma* is, it cannot have been during Kleon's active political life, so the reference in the *Knights* remains unexplained. The argument that the unknown *diateichisma* of the decree corresponds to those mentioned in Aristophanes does not have any archaeological evidence in its favour. A survey of the literary evidence is thus necessary to fully contextualize the problem.

Building Cross-Walls in Greek Authors

It is time now to shift the scope of the study from the material to the literary evidence. Although the chronology of Aristophanes' *Knights* was rejected by Thompson and Scranton,³⁹ and despite the recent corrections, the two lines identifying the *diateichisma* have not been reconsidered.

A different perspective is used in this article. Instead of analysing isolated words or a couple of lines, the paragraph in its full extent is considered, as well as the relationship between key terms. In this part of the comedy the Sausage-seller and the Paphlagonian are trying to gain the favour of the *demos*. After the Paphlagonian compared himself with Themistocles,⁴⁰ the Sausage-seller responds:

Ἄλλαντοπώλης

ὦ πόλις Ἄργους κλύεθ' οἷα λέγει. σὺ **Θεμιστοκλεῖ** ἀντιφερίζεις;
ὃς ἐποίησεν τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν μεστὴν εὐρῶν ἐπιχειλῆ,
815 καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἀριστώσῃ τὸν **Πειραιᾶ** προσέμαξεν,
ἀφελῶν τ' οὐδὲν τῶν ἀρχαίων ἰχθῦς καινοὺς παρέθηκεν:
σὺ δ' Ἀθηναίουσ ἐζήτησας **μικροπολίτας** ἀποφῆναι
διατειχίζων καὶ **χρησμοδῶν**, ὃ **Θεμιστοκλεῖ** ἀντιφερίζων.⁴¹

Sausage-Seller

Oh! Polis of Argos, do you hear what he says? Do you compare yourself to **Themistocles**?

He who, finding it half empty, made our city full to the brim,

³⁹ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 336.

⁴⁰ For a comparison between Themistokles and Kleon in *Knights* see Anderson 1989.

⁴¹ Aristophanes *Knights* 813-817; Sommerstein 1981; words highlighted are those relevant for the analysis.

[815] and one day gave us the **Piraeus** for dinner, and added fresh fish to all our usual meals.

But you, who measure yourself with **Themistocles**, sought to make us look **parish-pump citizens**,

by **shutting us within walls** and **chanting oracles to us**.

Sommerstein provides two possible explanations for this passage. In an earlier work, he considered this to be referring to a possible attempt of Kleon to separate the city quarters by means of walls.⁴² In a later and more detailed work, however, he interpreted the passage as a metaphor for the division in Athens or a possible building program that was never executed, since he translated ἐζήτησας in line 817 as 'have tried' (instead of 'sought').⁴³

The central term of this analysis is διατειχίζων. The first point to consider is that it is a verb, not a noun. It is referring to an action carried out by Kleon, not pointing to a concrete structure. Aristophanes is not saying that Kleon constructed the *diateichisma*; he is pointing out that Kleon is carrying out an action. The literal meaning of this action is 'to cut off by means of a wall'. Although this is the only use of this verb by Aristophanes, we can explore its meaning in other authors. The most extended is the erection of a wall across an isthmus. This meaning, associated with the Isthmus of Corinth in the days before the battle of Salamis,⁴⁴ can be found in Diodoros Siculus,⁴⁵ Lysias,⁴⁶ Isocrates,⁴⁷ Plutarch⁴⁸ and Appian.⁴⁹ Diodoros Siculus also used the same term to refer to the erection of a wall across the Chersonesos in the context of the invasion of the Thracians between 399 and 397 BCE, 'from sea to sea' (ἀπὸ θαλάττης [...] μέχρι θαλάττης).⁵⁰ Finally, Strabo mentioned the attempt to build a similar wall by Dionysus in its war against the Leucani, across the isthmus in the Scylletic Gulf.⁵¹

⁴² Barret and Sommerstein 1978: 319.

⁴³ Aristophanes *Knights*; Sommerstein 1981: 188.

⁴⁴ Herodotos 8.40; Godley 1981.

⁴⁵ Diodoros Siculus Library 11.16.2; Oldfather 1970.

⁴⁶ Lysias Funeral oration 2.44; Lamb 1976.

⁴⁷ Isocrates Panegiricus 4.93; Norlin 1928.

⁴⁸ Plutarch Themistocles 9.3; Perrin 1968.

⁴⁹ Appian, *Civil War* 5.6.56; White 1928.

⁵⁰ Diodoros Siculus Library 14.38.7; Oldfather 1954.

⁵¹ Strabo Geography 6.1.10; Jones 1924.

The use of this verb in military context however, does not imply, , the presence of an isthmus. In several paragraphs of Appian we can find διατειχίζω applied to the erection of linear fortifications that cut off roads, regions or cities. In *Civil War* Cassius and Brutus fortified a mountain pass between two hills, and that extended during the advance of Antonius.⁵² The term can also be found referring to the erection of non-linear military structures, sometimes keeping and sometimes losing its sense of separation. In Appian we find the term expressing the construction of a wall inside the city to create a 'fortified quarter' in which Augustus established a garrison among the Segestani.⁵³ Diodoros Siculus referred to the erection of general fortifications,⁵⁴ while in Josephus⁵⁵ it was used to refer to the construction of towers. In the assault of Tarentum described by Polybius, the verb διατειχίσαι indicates the erection of barricades in the streets, which actually crossed them from side to side and enclosed different areas of the city.⁵⁶

The meaning of separation by means of a wall, although not associated with fortifications, can be found in Josephus. In *Jewish Antiquities* he mentioned the separation by means of a wall of the different areas of worship in the Temple of Jerusalem.⁵⁷ In Appian διατειχίζω is used in the construction of a dike crossing a river,⁵⁸ while Aelian uses this term to describe the internal division that the ants construct in their nests.⁵⁹

While most of the usages of the term refer to the erection of linear constructions, some authors have used the term as a metaphor. Eusebius of Caesarea used the term to describe the separation of the Red Sea in the Exodus that formed walls of water,⁶⁰ while Strabo used the term to describe the Caucasus, separating the Pontic and the Caspian seas.⁶¹ Finally, in the *Symposium* of Xenophon, while discussing the beauty of noses, Socrates defends himself alleging that a high nose is less beautiful because it walls the eyes from one another.⁶²

⁵² Caesar 4.13.106; 4.14.107; 4.16.119; White 1928.

⁵³ Appian Illyrian War 4.24; White 1912.

⁵⁴ Diodoros Siculus Library 15.42.3; Sherman 1952.

⁵⁵ Josephus Jewish Antiquities 5.198; Thackeray and Marcus 1934.

⁵⁶ Polybius Histories 8.32.2; Paton 1923.

⁵⁷ Josephus Jewish Antiquities 5.198; Thackeray and Marcus 1934.

⁵⁸ Appian Roman History 2.21.153; White 1913.

⁵⁹ Aelian About the nature of the Animals 6.43; Scholfield 1959.

⁶⁰ Eusebius of Caesarea Historia Ecclesiastica 7.21.4; Oulton 1938.

⁶¹ Strabo Geography 11.2.15; Jones 1944.

⁶² Xenophon Symposium 5.6; Brownson and Todd 1932.

Before addressing the meaning of διατειχίζων in Aristophanes some chronological issues must be considered. Although all authors listed provide a very consistent meaning for the term, whether as a linear fortification or a metaphoric barrier that separates different elements, none of them is contemporary to Aristophanes. Xenophon, one generation younger, used the term in a metaphoric way, although there is no doubt that he is referring to a linear structure of separation. Of greater interest is the fact that Herodotus, who first described the events of the Battle of Salamis, does not use the term when he wrote about the fortification of the isthmus (οἱ δὲ ἐπυρθάνοντο τὸν Ἴσθμὸν αὐτοῦς τειχέοντας, not διατειχίζοντας)⁶³ although all later authors have consistently used διατειχίζω to refer specifically to this event. Thus, the term seems to originate in a time between Herodotus, who does not use it even to describe the Greek strategy prior to Salamis, and Aristophanes, who could have taken the inspiration, and the term, from contemporary defensive works at Athens.

‘Kleon’s Wall’: Metaphor and Reality

Following the premises described in the introduction, material and textual evidence are analysed on the same grounds of archaeological inquiry. This means that no privileged position is granted to the textual evidence, and that the internal contradictions that exist are used to create the most plausible interpretation from the available data.

The first example of this theoretical position is the analysis of the text of Aristophanes. It is considered that since there is no correlation with a real wall, the use of the term διατειχίζων is used in a metaphoric sense.⁶⁴ However, this proposition does not answer two major questions: first, if the term is just a metaphor to explain the disruption created by Kleon in the social fabric, why is it necessary? We have several terms that can express the same idea in a more explicit way, for example στάσις. It is used by ancient and modern authors to define civil strife that derives from revolts, as in the well-known events in Corcyra, contemporaneous with the authors,⁶⁵ and during which the population was

⁶³ Herodotus *Histories* 8.40.2; Godley 1925.

⁶⁴ Sommerstein 1981.

⁶⁵ Thucydides 3.82; Smith 1920.

separated into two factions. The reason for using διατειχίζων must, in consequence, be more convoluted. And here is where the nature of the comedy comes into play. A joke is always going to be funnier, and have more impact with the public, if it can somehow be related to a real element. These double-senses are common in Aristophanes; in a passage of the same comedy, Aristophanes closes a flatulent joke with a reference to Kropos, that can be translated as dung but is also an actual *demos* close to Eleusis.⁶⁶ Metaphor and reality can also explain why the author used this term: he was pointing out the internal tension that Kleon was creating in Athens by pointing towards some defensive construction (not materially proved, however) that the politician was sponsoring.

The lack of a real wall can be considered the main proof of the weakness of this argument, but before addressing this problem let us come back to the paragraph in *Knights*. Former analyses have not considered other key terms – highlighted in bold text in the translation above - that occur in the same text. We have to remember that the paragraph is a response of the sausage-seller to Paphlagon's (Kleon's), comparing himself to Themistocles. The politician is depicted as a poor copy of the statesman and hero of the Persian Wars. This explains the occurrence of the reference to the Peiraeus in the text, the great defensive construction of Athens that granted the polis its naval supremacy, against the negative διατειχίζων of Kleon. The reference to the oracles (χρησμοδῶν), despite the fame of the oracle of the wooden-walls interpreted by Themistocles as the Athenian fleet, is secondary and less ambiguous than the term μικροπολίτας, which can be translated as citizen of a small city. Since the *diateichisma* will reduce the perimeter of the city, but also transform the citizens into members of a petty-state due to the civil strife promoted by Kleon, the term διατειχίζων acquires a double sense. If the former interpretation of the texts is correct, a real correlation with the metaphoric wall is necessary to provide the joke with its full sense. A detailed study of the archaeological context allows us, however, to consider some candidates.

The first are the repairs that, in the first years of the Peloponnesian War, were effected on the Themistoclean Wall.⁶⁷ These were due to a succession of earthquakes that affected the upper courses of the curtain. The problem with this identification lies in the fact that

⁶⁶ Aristophanes, *Knights* 899; Sommerstein 1981.

⁶⁷ Conolly and Dodge 1998: 17; Theodoraki 2011: 112-113.

these repairs have been found only in the area of the *Kerameikos* and the uncertain time-frames excavators have provided; the repairs could be dated back to the time of Kleon (429-422 BCE) or Nikias (421-416 BCE) although the earthquake of 426 BCE seems to have been specially intense and thus the best chronological candidate.⁶⁸ The problem with this identification is that not only are these repairs located in a small section of the walls but also that they do not justify the use of the preposition *δια-*, since there is no separation of areas through a linear structure nor the term *μικροπολίτας*, since the perimeter is not reduced.

Similar problems can be found with the second candidate, the *proteichisma*. This was an advance line of defence composed of a moat and a low wall, projecting from the city walls in order to counteract the use of siege engines. They were constructed in the early years of the Peloponnesian Wars⁶⁹ but these fortifications again do not account for a reduction in the size of the city nor the construction of linear defences.

The third and last candidate is the *diateichisma*, not as it has been preserved until the present time, but a former structure in the same location. The evidence for this wall is epigraphical and, to some extent, also material.

At this point, we must return to an examination of the Decree of 307-306 BCE (IGII² 463). As explained above, this must refer to a former *diateichisma* since the current dates for the second wall do not go earlier than 300 BCE. Further, it cannot be interpreted as a previous phase of the same wall, since that date comes from the foundation trenches. However, although the wall was repaired in 307-306 BCE, there is no reason to support the existence of this first *diateichisma* as early as 424 BCE, when *Knights* was performed at the Lenaia.⁷⁰ There are, however, some problems in the archaeological context that have never been properly explained. When Thompson and Scranton published the results of their excavations, they pointed out that:

In its course over the rear wall of the East Stoa, the 'fortification exhibits a curious peculiarity. There is a well-dressed, rock-cut bedding all along the ridge, about 5.00m. behind the face of the rear

⁶⁸ Theodoraki 2011: 113.

⁶⁹ Fields 2006: 24; Theodoraki 2011: 112.

⁷⁰ Barret and Sommerstein 1978: 31.

foundation of the Stoa at the west end, 4.00m. at the east end, and extending some 3.20m. beyond the Stoa to the east. Thence it turns south-east and is lost after a few metres, continuing parallel to the line of the Compartment Wall. This cutting has every indication of having been intended for a fortification, and yet the Compartment Wall itself does not use it, but on the contrary, at the west end of the Stoa, is supported on several courses of stone built against the rock slope below the cutting in question. It is possible that this cutting was originally intended for the Compartment Wall, but that later its width (assuming that the Stoa wall marks the field face) was considered excessive, and the width of the wall was reduced, necessitating the abandonment of the original cutting. There is also, however, a bare possibility that this and some other unexplained cuttings may belong to a still earlier scheme of fortifications that never got beyond the initial stages. In support of this is the superior quality of the cutting, compared to the workmanship certainly associated with the Compartment Wall; against it is the complete lack of any other evidence, and the possibility of explaining it, however unsatisfactorily, as a false move, on the part of the Compartment Wall builders.⁷¹

The excavators themselves realised the possible connection between this unfinished trench and the *diateichisma* of Kleon, but they considered it to be doubtful, not providing any further explanation.⁷² However, this 'false' move, on the part of the Compartment Wall builders does not explain why in her re-creation of the Athenian walls Theocharaki includes a section of the wall⁷³ that runs parallel to the main defensive line and does not define a fortified space, as in the case of the Mouseion Hill, nor create a *cul-de-sac* to defend a gate.⁷⁴ The scarce remains are not enough to locate a defensive line that 'cross[ed] the city and ma[de] it smaller' in the time of Kleon, but establishes a reasonable doubt about the accuracy of our knowledge of the absolute dates of erection of these structures and the problems that the binary opposition of the evidence can cause.

Further Implications: The Red Queen

The data and its possible interpretation presented in this paper produce what evolutionary biologists, as well as readers of Lewis Carroll, call a Red Queen Effect: 'It takes all the

⁷¹ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 310.

⁷² Thompson and Scranton 1943: 336.

⁷³ Starting in UTM 34S x=475280, y=4209290.

⁷⁴ Theocharaki 2011: 82; see figure 3.

running you can do, to keep in the same place'⁷⁵ The review of the material and literary evidence does not provide conclusive results on the identification of a defensive structure that could be assigned to Kleon, leaving the joke of Aristophanes as a mere metaphor of the damage of the demagogue to the social fabric of the city. From my perspective, however, this appreciation is not correct. The analysis of the lines of Aristophanes has shown that a possible 'materiality' of the joke can be assumed, at least more convincingly than the mere cross-reference with the scholiasts. The material record remains inconclusive, but enough examples of the problematic interpretations of the results have been offered. It is necessary to realize that all our interpretations come from a single field project that was published in 1943. No more extensive excavations have taken place in the area, mainly because of the proximity of other structures that could not be altered, such as the church of Saint Demetrios that covers part of the *Dypilon* above the Gates.⁷⁶ Further, it has not been taken into account that in the Decree of 307-306 BCE it is ordered that the walls that present a bad state of preservation must be demolished before its reconstruction (ἐρείψε(ι)ν),⁷⁷ which increases the difficulty of the location of a fifth century BCE structure in the area. We can only agree with the original excavators that 'further excavation is needed at a number of critical points of both the public buildings and the fortifications'.⁷⁸ However, if this excavation finally takes place, the possibility must be considered that the reference in Aristophanes could be more literal than has been traditionally considered.

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⁷⁵ Carroll 1871 [1960]: 345.

⁷⁶ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 317.

⁷⁷ IGII² 463, line 104.

⁷⁸ Thompson and Scranton 1943: 270.

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Figures

Figure 1: Successive courses in a section of the Diateichisma in the hill of the Pnyx. The inferior ashlar courses correspond to the Compartment Wall phase (Author's collection).

Figure 2: Compartment wall over the east end of East Stoa, from the North (Thompson and Scranton 1943: 304)

Figure 3: Diateichisma Wall (in yellow). After Theodoraki (2011: 82).