

This is a very preliminary report of the 2007 season of excavation at the Athenian Agora; the results presented here are tentative and should be considered with caution.

SECTION BZ SOUTH (Plan 1)

This area was excavated under the supervision of Mike Laughey, assisted by Jen Poppel. Two primary areas were investigated: the north-south road and the areas west of the road. In the road, we continued to take down the very hard-packed gravel surfaces, mostly of the Roman period, 4th century AD. In doing so, we fully exposed the later water supply lines found in earlier seasons, one of terracotta and two of lead (Fig. 1). These will all have been for fresh water, and were probably pressure lines. Lower down, we cleared more of the deep street drain and, at the extreme north, another subsidiary channel entering it from the west. All these channels, both supply and drainage, were in use in the 4th or 5th centuries AD.

To the west, we explored deeper fills under the Roman levels. Here, though we have little associated architecture, we excavated Hellenistic and Classical levels. In one area we exposed a fairly well-preserved pyre, of the type known from across the ancient street and in other areas of the Agora. They are usually deliberately buried under the floors of private houses or commercial buildings and are being studied as a group by Susan Rotroff. The example found this year seems to date to the late 4th or early 3rd century BC. It contained a lamp, a drinking cup, a pyxis, and several of the characteristic unglazed plates, cooking pots, and small saucers

SECTION BZ NORTH (Plan 1)

This area was supervised by Marcie Handler, assisted by Chris Young. We excavated mostly Classical and Hellenistic levels in and behind the Classical commercial building. One of the major gains of the season was to establish beyond doubt that the commercial building extended this far north. More of its eastern back wall was exposed, along with several cross-walls, and we can now speak with some confidence of at least six rooms/shops set side-by-side along the east side of the street. An intermediate phase of the building was uncovered in the form of a draw-shaft and part of the tunnel of a Hellenistic cistern complex found outside the building to the east. It was of standard form, a vertical shaft waterproofed with a good hard white mortar (Fig. 2). The shaft itself was ca. 0.75-0.90 m. in diameter, preserved to a depth of ca. 2.50 m. The tunnel runs off to the northwest and may be heading to a collapsed cistern we have located within the building itself. The tunnel showed signs of collapse about a meter from the draw-shaft and will have to be explored in future seasons. Fill within the shaft suggests that it went out of use in the 2nd half of the 3rd century BC. A wall of the 1st century BC/AD was eventually built over the mouth of the drawshaft.

Finds from this season in this area included several lead and terracotta tokens or seal impressions. For tokens generally and their uses for distributions, admissions, and as vouchers, see Mabel Lang and Margaret Crosby, *The Athenian Agora, Volume X, Weights, Measures, and Tokens*, Princeton, 1964, esp. pp. 76-78. In the Agora we have about 900 examples, carrying a wide range of symbols and depictions. Some of this year's finds were of types previously known, such as one showing a round shield decorated with the letter A (Fig. 3). This type is part of a series showing shields, breastplates, helmets, and greaves, thought to have been used for issuing armor from the state arsenal (J. Kroll in *Hesperia* 1977, pp. 141 ff.). Other examples found this year are more unusual, in particular a small lead token with the stamped depiction of a 'Gallic' shield, recognizable from its elongated oval shape and the central spine (Fig. 3). Such shields were used by northern invaders into Greece in the 270's BC, usually referred to as Gauls or Celts. They were largely turned back by the Greeks (especially the Aetolians and Athenians) at Thermopylai in 279 BC, though a small contingent attacked Delphi and was driven off with divine help (Pausanias 10. 19-23). They then crossed the Hellespont and caused havoc in Asia Minor for a generation or so, eventually settling down there and becoming known as the Galatians (as in the New Testament). Captured shields of this type are to be seen in many sculpted representations of trophies celebrating victories over the Gauls, and on many Hellenistic coins, especially those minted by the Aetolian league. The defeat of these barbarians was often seen as a parallel with the earlier Greek victories over the Persians, especially by the Aetolians and the Attalid kings of Pergamon, who fought them repeatedly.

SECTION GAMMA

Laura Gawlinski supervised work in the area south of the Tholos, assisted by Johanna Hobratchk. Here we continued to explore the building traditionally identified as the *Strategeion*, as well as the scrappy remains of Classical buildings lying somewhat to the east. In the '*Strategeion*' we excavated a series of well-preserved levels in the eastern part of the building, presumably successive floors covering its period of use. This included a pit full of marble chips, itself overlying a pit filled with amphoras (Fig. 4b). Parts of at least six were recovered; though found in fragments, at least some of the amphoras seem to have been deposited while still whole. From their shapes, several seem to have come from the North Aegean - perhaps from the island of Thasos - while two others are recognizable as coming from the island of Chios (Fig. 4a). One had an incised inscription on the shoulder: a delta-pi ligature (5x10: 50) followed by three vertical strokes = 53, presumably a measure of volume or cost. Associated black-glazed pottery found in the pit ('Pheidias' mug, stamped bowl, unglazed plate with moulded rim) suggests that it was filled in the late 5th century BC, though the amphoras are said by Mark Lawall to be first quarter of the 4th BC.

Elsewhere, fill under the floor went down as much as three meters, producing pottery of the late 8th and early 7th centuries BC. The '*Strategeion*', carved out of bedrock at the west, was set over a surprisingly deep gully in its eastern part.

Further east, we began the exploration of a series of small irregular buildings, in part to determine if they represent houses, shops, or public buildings. There are at least two phases. The earlier remains, only partly explored, consist of the rubble walls of buildings in use in the 4th and 5th centuries BC, lying west of the main road which at that time led into the Agora square from the southwest. These remains were replaced by walls of more substantial construction, presumably in the late Classical or Hellenistic period. In the middle of the 2nd century BC, when the Middle Stoa was built, the line of the old road to the east was covered and the road was shifted westward, covering much of this area with a succession of hard-packed gravel surfaces.

Small finds from Section Gamma this year included lead weights, terracotta and lead tokens, bone eyelets, the lower part of a red-figured lebes gamikos, and part of the marble eye from a trireme (Fig. 5a-c).

SECTION BH - Painted Stoa (Plan 2)

Section BH was supervised by Anne McCabe, assisted by Matt Baumann. We cleared the last of the 10th/11th century walls and other Byzantine (Fig. 6) installations and began to go lower, into late Roman fills. Here, further excavation confirmed what we suspected last year, that we have uncovered a stretch of the back wall of the Stoa Poikile, the first new bits to become visible since the west end of the building was found over 25 years ago. The new part found this season consists of two adjacent blocks from the outer face of the back wall of the building, made of limestone and originally joined at the ends with a double-T clamp (Fig. 7). They are orthostate blocks, that is, from the first standing course of the wall. The back faces are finished with a drove (flat-faced chisel), while the top surfaces have been finished with a claw chisel. Each block has a projecting boss left on its outer face. The difference in the tooling and the presence of bosses so low down leave open the possibility that the blocks are reused. Blocks in secondary use, presumably made available by the Persian destruction of Athens, were found in the western foundations. The tops of the new blocks lie at ca. 53.54 m. above sea level, which means they rise ca. 1.30 m. higher than any part of the building seen to the west.

To the southeast the top of a limestone unfluted column shaft ca. 0,60 m. in diameter appeared below the Byzantine walls, lying very close to the projected placement of an interior Ionic column of the Stoa and also apparently in situ (Fig. 8). It stands to a level of ca. 53.20 masl, much higher than anything seen to the west. If it is in situ, then we are unlikely to see the east end of the building, which can lie no closer than 4 meters northeast of the column, beyond the present limits of the trench. As this column falls 44 meters from the west end, the minimum length of the stoa must be 48 meters. In any case, at present it looks as though the eastern part of the building, where we are presently excavating, is appreciably better preserved than further west.

On the Identification of the Stoa:

The identification of the remains is by no means a sure thing, though the weight of evidence seems to favor the Poikile, famous for its paintings and as the birthplace of Stoic philosophy. There is a wide range of scholarly opinion as to whether or not that identification is correct. Some are so sure it is that an article has been written describing exactly where the paintings should go in the mostly unexcavated building and how large they were. This has led in turn to a second article discussing how much room was then left over for the shields, captured from the Spartans at Pylos in 425/4 BC, which were displayed in the building for centuries. At the other end of the scale are several scholars who reject the identification entirely, preferring to see the remains as those of another missing stoa, the Stoa of the Herms.

The identification as the Poikile rests first on Pausanias (1. 14-15), who described it during his visit to Athens in ca. AD 150. After referring to the Hephaisteion as being on the hill above the Royal Stoa, he describes in order a sanctuary of Aphrodite Ourania, a gate carrying a trophy of the Athenian cavalry over the Macedonians, and the Stoa Poikile. He then moves on to describe a series of monuments which lie to the east, under modern Plaka. We have the sequence of monuments noted by Pausanias: sanctuary, gate, and stoa, in the order in which he saw them, moving towards the east.

The archaeological evidence corresponds to what we know from other ancient sources (Agora III, nos. 47-98) concerning the history of the Stoa. It was built at the time of Kimon's ascendancy, that is in the 470's or 460's BC, and it survived until late antiquity, at least as late as the time of the Bishop Synesius, who saw the building (though not the paintings) in the years around AD 400. Pottery found against the foundations and under the floor at the west indicates a construction date around 470 BC, and the building certainly stood until the 6th century AD.

Finally, the numerous ancient references (50) indicate that the Poikile was a well-known and prominent building, used for a variety of public functions. The present remains of a large stoa (44+ meters), facing south, overlooking the Agora square and the Acropolis corresponds to such prominence.

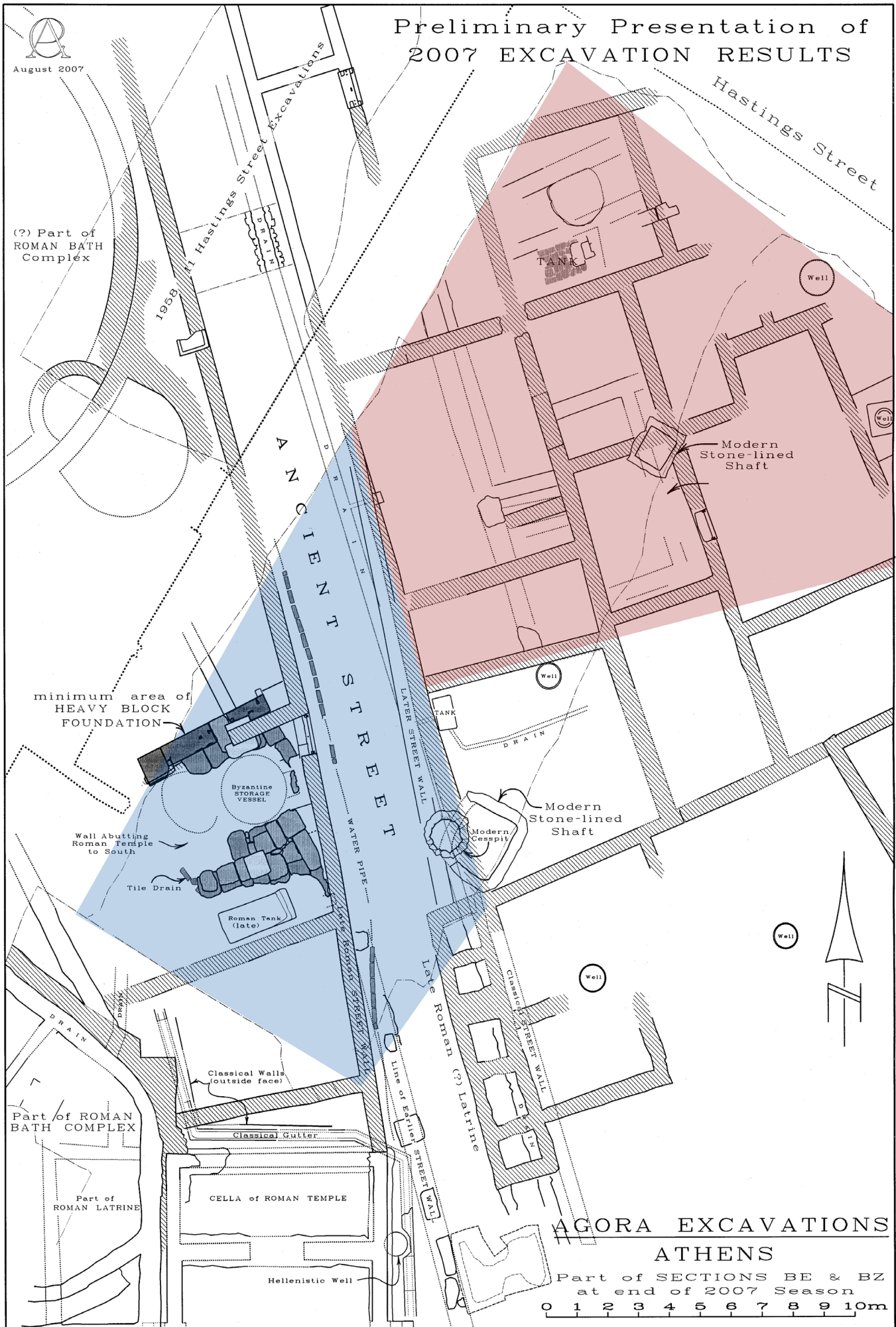
As noted, those who reject the Poikile identification identify it as the Stoa of the Herms. It, too, seems to have been standing in the 5th century BC, at the time of Kimon (Aeschines III, 183-185), and it is referred to in several Hellenistic inscriptions (Arch. Delt. 18, 1963, pp. 99-114 and Hesperia 65, 1996, pp. 252-257). Pausanias does not describe it, however, nor does it appear in any source of the Roman period, leaving open the possibility that it did not survive the siege of Sulla in 86 BC, in which case the archaeological evidence for our stoa would not match the history of the Stoa of the Herms.

In short, at the moment the problem is one building, two missing stoas: the Poikile and the Herms. On balance, if we have to pick a single stoa, the identification of the Poikile seems preferable, on the basis of location, size, and history of the building; there is certainly no stronger evidence in favor of the Herms. Continuing excavations will perhaps shed more conclusive light on the issue.

There is a compromise position, and that is to assign both names to a single building. There are numerous examples of this in Athens: 1) The Poikile itself was originally known as the Peisianakteios, after the man who had it built, 2) the Tholos is referred to in inscriptions as both the Tholos and the Skias, and the area around it was known as the Prytanikon, and 3) the Polemarcheion was also known as the Epilykeion. In theory, our building could easily have been referred to as both the Poikile and the Herms.

Those of us who have worked at the Agora for a while are reluctant to take this path because it was tried once before, with dismal results. By the 1960's we had a similar problem: one stoa, two names (Zeus Eleutherios and Basileios). The route of the Panathenaic Way was clear, and as there were only 18 meters between the north end of the Stoa of Zeus and the road, it was clear that no stoa could fit in that tiny space (unexcavated, north of the railroad tracks). So the two names were assigned to the single stoa, though many people were not happy with that solution. How right they were was shown in 1970 when, digging north of the railroad, we uncovered an 18-meter stoa, right where it should be, between the Stoa of Zeus and the Panathenaic Way. So for some of us there is a residual psychological reluctance to applying two names to a single stoa.

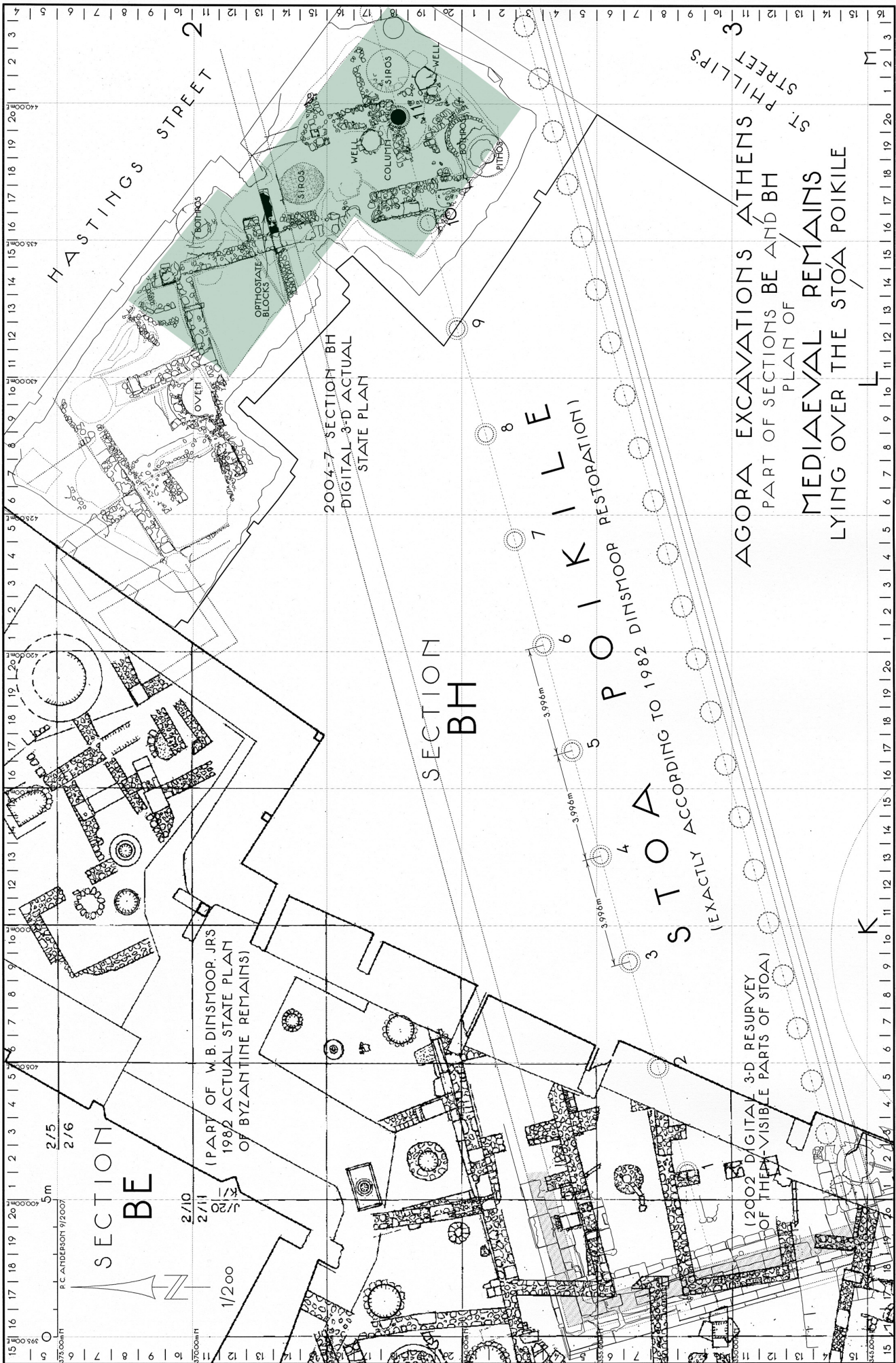
Preliminary Presentation of 2007 EXCAVATION RESULTS



AGORA EXCAVATIONS ATHENS

Part of SECTIONS BE & BZ
at end of 2007 Season

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10m



AGORA EXCAVATIONS ATHENS
 PART OF SECTIONS BE AND BH
 PLAN OF
 MEDIAEVAL REMAINS
 LYING OVER THE STOA POIKILE

2004-7 SECTION BH
 DIGITAL 3-D ACTUAL
 STATE PLAN

2/10
 2/11
 2/12
 (PART OF W. B. DINSMOOR, JRS
 1982 ACTUAL STATE PLAN
 OF BYZANTINE REMAINS)

2002 DIGITAL 3-D RESURVEY
 OF THE VISIBLE PARTS OF STOA

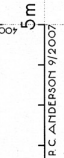
SECTION
 BH

SECTION
 BE

STOA
 (EXACTLY ACCORDING TO 1982 DINSMOOR RESTORATION)

HASTINGS STREET 2

PHILLIPS STREET 3



5m

1/200

PC ANDERSON 9/2007

395.00m

440.00m

425.00m

440.00m



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

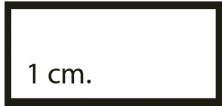


Fig. 3



Fig. 4 a



Fig. 4 b



Fig. 5 a



Fig. 5 b

Fig. 5 c



Fig. 6



Fig.7



Fig. 8