

Στοά, The Main element in the Greek Agora

Dr. Marwa Ragab Mohamed Hassan Elganiney

Director of Mission and Excavation Department, Helwan Archaeological Area,
Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Egypt

Prof. Dr. Ibrahim Saad Ibrahim Saleh

Prof. of Classical Archaeology, Department of Archaeology, Greco-Roman Section
Faculty of Arts, Tanta University, Egypt

Summary

The Mediterranean climate of ancient Greece played a direct role in shaping the social fabric of its inhabitants, as the temperate weather encouraged outdoor activities and motivated individuals to meet and gather in open spaces. This social habit, in turn, created an increasing need for public buildings that could accommodate daily interaction. At the heart of the urban fabric of Greek cities stood the Agora, serving as the central hub of political, economic, social, and even religious life. The Agora was an open space surrounded by specialized public structures, fulfilling multiple functions that included the administration of civic affairs, the organization of markets, and the hosting of public events.

Among the most prominent architectural elements of the Agora was the Stoa, regarded as one of the most refined and significant architectural innovations of the ancient world. The Stoa was a rectangular building with a flat or slightly sloping roof, supported by regular rows of columns built according to the Doric or Ionic orders, reflecting both the engineering precision and the aesthetic sensibilities of Greek architects. These columns served not only as structural supports but also as decorative elements, creating a rhythmic visual harmony along the façade of the building.

The Stoa typically lined the edges of the Agora's courtyards, functioning as covered walkways that offered protection from the intense summer sun, seasonal rains, and prevailing winds. While its primary purpose was to accommodate public activities such as popular gatherings and commercial markets, the Stoa also served a variety of additional roles. It could act as an entrance to official buildings or temples and occasionally hosted philosophical debates that became a hallmark of classical Greek intellectual life, particularly in Athens. One of the most renowned historical examples is the Stoa of Attalos, restored in the twentieth century and converted into a museum housing archaeological finds from the Agora.



The Stoa represented a multifunctional architectural model that combined aesthetic elegance with practical utility, embodying the Greek philosophical belief that public spaces should not merely serve as thoroughfares, but rather as venues for human interaction, the exchange of knowledge, and the reinforcement of civic identity. Its influence extended into later periods, inspiring Roman architecture in the design of basilicas and colonnaded walkways, and its conceptual legacy can still be traced in European and global architectural traditions that prioritize shaded, sheltered public areas.

The legacy of the Stoa remains evident today, as its architectural vocabulary continues to influence the design of major public buildings such as town halls, libraries, and courthouses. This enduring presence attests to the depth and continuity of this Greek architectural achievement, which harmoniously integrated function and artistry into a timeless form

Key Words

Αγορά - Στοά - democracy - marketplace - Agoranomeion.

The Heart of Ancient Greek City-States: ἡ Ἀγορά

Thrumming with life lay the Ἀγορά.¹ Served as the vibrant heart of ancient Greek city-states, more than just a marketplace, it was a bustling hub for commerce, politics, religion, and social interaction.

Its very name, derived from the Greek verb ἀγοράζω², "meaning to assemble in the marketplace", hints at its multifaceted nature. So The nature of the commercial Ἀγορά, and the city-state was represented in the state of the public market, as it was like the heart of social and commercial life and surrounded by arcades and roofed Στοαί to protect citizens from the heat of the sun and weather fluctuations, and it was also used by philosophers and preachers, and it is mentioned that one of the philosophical schools in Athens called it Stoicism relative to the στοά.

The Ἀγορά was a central marketplace and public gathering place in ancient Greek city-states. It was a place where people could buy and sell goods, meet friends, discuss politics, and listen to philosophers. The Ἀγορά was also the site of many important public buildings, such as the council chamber and the law courts.³

The Ἀγορά was a vital part of ancient Greek life. It was a place where people could come together to interact with each other and participate in the civic life of their city. The Ἀγορά was also a place where new ideas were exchanged and where the pulse of the city could be felt.⁴

The Ἀγορά continues to be an important symbol of democracy and civic engagement today. It is a reminder of the importance of public spaces and of the power of people to come together to shape their communities (Fig. 1).⁵

¹ A vibrant hub of civic life where commerce, politics, and religion intertwined, this central public square served as the nucleus of the polis, a testament to the ingenuity and social fabric of Greek society. It is the Greek public square, on which all political, administrative and commercial activities are concentrated, and we also find the religious aspect represented by temples, niches and altars to give sanctity to the site, so it became the heart of the Greek polis, and government buildings, temples and στοαί with multiple purposes were built on it, and sometimes the central open square is framed. We find temporary shops in the market, and the Greeks gathered for commercial barter and discussion of political issues, and in contemporary city planning studies, the Ἀγορά is discussed as the ideal public place and its existence is seen as a watershed moment in the history of the city; Hansen M. H. (1991), *The Agora and the development of Athenian democracy*, In *The Athenian Agora*, vol. 15, Princeton University Press, p.5; Traill, Hannah (2007), *The Athenian Agora, A History of Democracy and the Space of the People*, Princeton University Press, p.102; Sennett E.G., and Richard, (1998), *The Spaces of Democracy*, Raoul Wallenberg Lecture, Michigan; Osborne R. (2011), *The agora and the polis*, In *A Companion to Ancient Greece*, John Wiley & Sons, p.315.

² Thompson H.A. (1954a), *The Agora at Athens and the Greek Market Place*, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 13, No. 4, p.9.

³ Ehrenberg V., (1958), *Greek City-States*, Methuen & Co., Ltd; Keeley, Robert, (1997), *The Greek City, States and Societies in Transition*, University of California Press.

⁴ Miller S. G., (2003), *The Ancient Greek Market: Economics, Institutions, and Society*, Princeton University Press.

⁵ Morris, I., and A. R. Knodell, (2015), *Greek Cities in the First Millennium B.C*, In *the Cambridge World History*, Vol. 3, *Early Cities in Comparative Perspective, 4000 B.C- CE 1200*, edited by N. Yoffee, 343-363, Cambridge university Press, p.362

Στοαί

The pleasant weather provided the Greeks with opportunities to engage and assemble outside their homes. This had a significant impact on the thriving of social life and the emergence of open-air public buildings. To cater to the nature of these gatherings, architects devised architectural styles suited for such activities. As a result, the Αγορά in Athens and indeed in all Greek cities became the focal point of daily life. It served as the marketplace, the seat of governance, and a hub for social, intellectual, and political activities, poetry readings and other events.

Στοαί are among the public buildings that were built in the Greek markets¹, and they are known idiomatically as στοά, and they are a rectangular structure. The columns carried a roof to prevent rain and protect from the heat of the sun, some of them were just roofed entrances of the buildings, and others carried their roofs with columns, and often the στοαί had a back wall with a facade with single or double columns, in addition to walls with a short end, and in the back wall there is rows of rooms with an external facade towards the columns, so the στοαί became basically one-story buildings, while it became uncommon later on to have two floors, such as the στοά of Attalos II in the Athenian Αγορά², and the στοαί surround the courtyard on each side, one alternating with the other According to the change of times and seasons to provide light, shadows and protection from the wind, and the halls were initially designated for public outings and traveling merchants, and philosophers' symposiums were held in them for their students; Where Socrates frequented the στοά of Zeus, while Zeno frequented the painted στοά, hence the stoicism of Zeno's philosophical school in 300 B.C.

Eight Στοαί have been built throughout the history of the ancient Αγορά, serving various administrative, civic, religious, and economic purposes. Their existence has been confirmed through both ancient texts and archaeological remains found at the site. These στοαί include :

1. The Middle Στοά: for economic activities, around 180 B.C
2. The South Στοά II: for economic activities, in the middle of the 2nd century B.C.
3. The Στοά of Attalos: for economic activities, 159-138 B.C.
4. The South Στοά I: for economic activities, 430-420 B.C
5. The Στοά of Hermes: for administrative, civic and religious activities, in the mid-5th century BC

¹ Martin R., (1953), Recherches sur l'agora grecque, Études d'histoire et d'architecture urbaines, In Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire, pp. 449-502; Wyckley R. E., (1969), How the Greeks Built Cities, pp. 110-119.

² Coulton, J. J., (1976), the Architectural Development of the Greek stoa, Oxford, Clarendon Press, pp. 1-3.

6. The Στοά Poikile: administrative, civic and religious activities, in the middle of the 5th century BC.
7. The Royal Στοά: for administrative, civic and religious activities, in the middle of the 6th century B.C.
8. The Στοά of Zeus: for administrative, civic and religious activities, 425 B.C.

Στοά Βασιλέως (The Royal Στοά or the Στοά of the King)

Location: The στοά stood at the lowest point in the Αγορά proper; the point toward which the whole square sloped down from both south and east.

Its floor lay 3.02 m. At the northeast foot of Kolonos Agoraios at the point where two roads coming from the north and northwest converged on the area that was beginning to take shape as the Αγορά of classical times. (Fig. 2) ¹

Throughout antiquity this small building was to stand as the northwestern most features surrounding the central square. ²

Facing slightly south of east the στοά had the same direction as the archaic shrine, perhaps of Zeus, the ruins of which caused the neighboring στοά of Zeus.

Materials: The southern portion of the rear wall; was polygonal masonry in limestone. The north wall: a single clamp-cutting of Z shape, has been observed & made of regular ashlar masonry of poros, smooth faced. In neither above point was stucco used in the original period. ³

Measuring: The στοά had an outer dimension of ca. 7.57 x 17.72 m., while its floor measured ca. 6.02 x 16.63 m. The north wall stands to a height of ca. 1.20 m. The intercolumniation was 1.92 m. ⁴

Description: Both the outer and the inner columns were Doric order, their lower diameters respectively 0.60 and 0.43 m., the shafts channeled with sixteen flutes. Two Doric capitals found in levels of late antiquity close to the building derive from the στοά, one is clearly from the outer colonnade; the other is presumably from the upper of the two inner series. The abaci flare widely; the flutes numbered sixteen. Shafts and capitals were stuccoed. Of the frieze there remains a fragmentary triglyph of poros, its side channeled to receive a metope, probably of marble. The roofing is

¹ Camp II, J.McK., (2003), *The Athenian Agora*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens In collaboration with the Pack and Humanities Institute, Picture Book No. 16, p. 41.

² Thompson, H. A., (1957), *Excavations in the Athenian Agora*, Vol. IX, Part I, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, pp. 153-156.

³ Travlos, J., (1971), *Pictorial dictionary of ancient Athens*, Thames and Hudson, p. 132.

⁴ Camp II, J.McK., (2001), *The Athenian Agora: Excavations in the Heart of Ancient Athens*, Thames & Hudson.

represented by a number of fragmentary terracotta eaves tiles, antefixes and scraping sima.¹

Dating: It's discovered in June of 1970. The best indication for the date of construction is afforded by the columns. The use of inferior stone and the employment of sixteen rather than the canonical twenty flutes give an impression of high antiquity. The profile of the capitals may be as early as the middle of the 6th century and is certainly not later than the third quarter of the century. The στοά was a small, rectangular building with two rows of columns, and it was built in the 6th century B.C.

This στοά was used as a meeting place for the Athenian king and his council, and it also served as a place for public gatherings and discussions.

This στοά was built of poros stone², and its dimensions were about 7.57 meters by 17.72 meters.³ The building had two rows of columns, each with eight columns. The columns were Doric in style, and they had sixteen flutes.

The roof of the στοά was made of terracotta tiles. This στοά was an important part of the Athenian Αγορά, and it was used for a variety of purposes. It was a place where the Athenian king and his council could meet to discuss important matters, and it was also a place where the public could gather to discuss the news of the day.⁴

This στοά was also used as a place to display works of art and to hold religious ceremonies. This στοά was destroyed in the Herulian sack of Athens in AD 267, but its ruins can still be seen today. The ruins of the στοά are a reminder of the important role that the building played in the life of ancient Athens.⁵

¹ Thompson, H. A., (1952), The Athenian Agora: Results of the Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Vol. 11, Stoa and Statues in the Agora, Princeton University Press, pp. 123-124.

² A type of limestone saturated with natural glass. It is composed of calcium carbonate grains (limestone) that have been melted by volcanic lava. stone is characterized by its excellent physical and mechanical properties, including high hardness, resistance to abrasion, and resistance to heat. It is also characterized by being lightweight and easy to sculpt, making it suitable for decorative and construction applications.

³ Traill, John S. (1978), The Agora of Athens, Princeton University Press, p. 32; Hesperia, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1971), pp.23-24;

⁴ Travlos J., (1971), Ancient Athens, Princeton University Press, p. 53; Homer A. Thompson (1947), The Athenian Agora, Princeton University Press, pp. 79-87; Michael Grant (1992), Athens and Ancient Greece, Routledge, pp. 78-79.

⁵ Miller, Stephen G. (2005), The Agora of Athens, In The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens, edited by John Boardman, Roger Matthews, and Oswyn Murray, Cambridge University Press, pp. 226-256.

Ἡ ποικίλη Στοά (Painted Στοά) (Στοά of Peisianax)

Location: The στοά Poikile was located on the north side of the Αγορά, facing south over the square. It was situated in the northeastern section of the excavations in front of the στοά of Attalos.¹

Materials: The στοά was constructed primarily from the same Pentelic marble used in many other major Athenian buildings. This white, crystalline limestone offered durability and beauty, perfect for the Stoa's prominent role in the city. The roof was likely made of timber covered with terracotta tiles.²

Measuring: The στοά was approximately 7.57 meters by 17.72 meters. It had two rows of columns, each with eight columns. The columns were Doric in style and had sixteen flutes.³

Description: The στοά was a Doric στοά located in the Αγορά of Athens, Greece. It was built in the middle of the 5th century B.C and was decorated with a series of paintings that depicted scenes from Greek mythology and history. The Στοά was named after Peisianax, who was responsible for its construction. The most famous painting in the στοά was the Marathon picture, which depicted the Battle of Marathon, a victory of the Athenians over the Persians in 490 B.C. (Fig. 3)⁴

Dating: The στοά was built in the middle of the 5th century B.C. The most specific date is 460 B.C, which is based on the style of the moldings.⁵

One of the first important buildings set up in the Αγορά after the Persian Wars was the Painted στοά (named it on account of the remarkable painted panels that adorned its back wall) (Fig. 4)⁶

Pausanias (1.15) provides a vivid description of the appearance of these paintings in his own day, some six hundred years later.

The paintings in the στοά included:

1. The Battle of Oenoe.⁷
2. Amazonomachy by Micon.
3. The Taking of Troy by Polygnotus.
4. The Battle of Marathon by Panaenus (also ascribed to Micon and Polygnotus who may have assisted in the work).⁸

¹ Hansen, H. T., (1991), *The Athenian Agora*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, p. 115.

² Travlos, J., (1971), p. 123

³ Jantzen, F. (1997), *Stories of Athens, An Interpretation of the City's Monuments*, University of California Press, pp. 39-42.

⁴ Camp II, (2003), p.44.

⁵ Thompson, H. A., (1947), *Ancient Athens*, J.M. Dent & Sons, pp. 110-112

⁶ Camp II, (2003), p.44.

⁷ Francis E.D., and Michael V., (1985), "Oenoe Painting in the Στοά Poikile, and Herodotus Account of Marathon", *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, Vol. 80, pp. 99-113.

⁸ Francesco de Angelis, (1996), "La battaglia di Maratona nella Στοά poikile," *ASNP.*, pp. 119-171.

The name Stoicism derives from the στοά Poikile (Ancient Greek: ἡ ποικίλη στοά), or "painted porch", a colonnade decorated with mythic and historical battle scenes on the north side of the Αγορά in Athens where Zeno of Citium and his followers gathered to discuss their ideas, near the end of the 4th century B.C.¹

Scattered bits of information from antiquity affirm to the variety of public uses of the στοά; For example, juries sometimes conducted their business in the στοά (IG II2 1641 and 1670), and public announcements were made there, Also as the meeting place of ordinary people, beggars, fishmongers, entertainers, and others selling their wares or merely escaping the heat of a summer's day.²

Ἡ Ερμού Στοά (The στοά of the Herms)

Location: The στοά of the Herms was located at the northwestern entrance to the Αγορά, the main square of ancient Athens. It was situated near the στοά Poikile and the στοά Basileios.

Materials: The στοά of the Herms was built of poros stone, a local limestone that was commonly used for construction in ancient Athens.

Measuring: The στοά of the Herms was approximately 10 meters long and 5 meters wide. The columns were approximately 2 meters tall.³

Description: The στοά of the Herms was a rectangular building with a colonnade on one side. The colonnade consisted of eight columns, which supported a roof. The στοά was decorated with three Herms, which were square pillars surmounted by a head of the god Hermes. The Herms were dedicated by the Athenian general Cimon in 475 B.C to commemorate his victory over the Persians at Eion in Thrace.

Dating: The στοά of the Herms was presumably built in the mid-5th century B.C, around the time of the Persian Wars (499-449 B.C). The exact date is uncertain, but it is likely that the στοά was built after the Persian destruction of Athens in 480 B.C

The στοά of the Herms was an important part of the exercises and ceremonial rides of the Athenian cavalry.⁴ The στοά was damaged by the Roman general Sulla in 86 B.C.⁵ The στοά of the Herms was not as well-known as the στοά Poikile or the στοά Basileios.

¹ Becker C.L., (2003), *A History of Western Ethics*, New York, Routledge. p.27.

² Camp II, J.McK. (2001), *The Archaeology of Athens* (New Haven and London, pp. 68-69.

³ Wycherley, R. E. (1978), *The Stoa of Attalus*, Princeton University Press; Hansen, H. T. (1991), *The Athenian Agora*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

⁴ Miller, S. G. (2005), *The Agora of Athens*, In *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 226-256.

⁵ Wycherley, R. E. (1978), *The stoa of Zeus in the Agora of Athens*, Princeton University Press, p.49.

Ἡ νότου Στοά I (The South στοά I)

Location: At the south end of the Αγορά and was turned at an angle with the eastern end of the στοά more to the south than the western end.

Materials: The stylobates at the στοά made of poros, a coarse limestone.

Measuring: A rectangular building, measured 80.47 meters in length and 14.89 meters in width.

Description: The στοά consisted of a long rectangular building. The lower parts of the walls consisted of large square blocks, which were reused from previous buildings in the region. The upper parts were of sundried mud bricks. The exterior of the στοά was of Doric design.¹

Dating: This στοά has been dated to c. 430-420 B.C.²

The στοά has been dated to c. 430-420 B.C, based on pottery found under the floor, and was in use until the South στοά II which replaced it in the middle of 2nd century B.C.³

The στοά consisted of a long a rectangular building, divided into a row with sixteen rooms along the south side and a double colonnade in front of them, out towards the open space of the Αγορά.

There have been guesses about whether it had a second floor, but there is no definite evidence for that. Studies have suggested that at least parts of the στοά supported a second floor.⁴ The entrance into the backrooms was located out of center.

The first six of the rooms, from the east, measures 4.86 x 4.86 meters, while the remaining rooms measures 4.86 x 4.71 meters. The columns of the στοά were unfluted. The foundations of five of the inner columns have been found in site at the east end of the στοά, the spacing between them about 3, 49 m. The inner colonnade consisted of 22 columns while the outer colonnade contained of 45 columns. All of the rooms, except eighth room were entered from the colonnade.⁵

Rooms:

1. The eighth room: was reached from a waiting room. In the later, the waiting room was converted into a passageway with a set of stairs.⁶
2. In the third, fifth and seventh rooms: there are an amount of 240 coins, primarily bronze.

¹ Thompson, H. A., & Wycherley, R. E., (1972), *The Agora of Athens*, Princeton University Press, p. 73.

² Camp II, (1986), pp. 122-126.

³ Camp II, (1986), pp. 122-126; Camp II, (2001), pp. 127-128.

⁴ Thompson, H.A. & Wycherley, R.E. (1972) *the Athenian Agora, Vol. XIV – The Agora of Athens: History, Shape and Uses of an Ancient City Centre*. Princeton, New Jersey, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, p. 75.

⁵ Camp II, (1986), pp. 122-126; Camp II, (2001), pp. 127-128; Camp II, (2003), pp. 20-21.

⁶ Thompson & Wycherley, (1972), pp. 74-76; Camp II, (1986), pp. 122-126.

3. In the fifth room: a raised cement border with a pebble-studded surface, on the floor, was found also this room had a later floor on top of the old floor layer with the cement border.
4. In the ninth room: was also found several of the rooms have had traces of ash and charcoal.
5. In the tenth room: a small hearth made from a wine jar was found fixed in the floor.¹

Ἡ Στοά του Αττάλου (The Στοά of Attalos)

Location: At the east side of the Athenian Αγορά and in the front facing out towards the square and at the site of the earlier square peristyle law court from the 4th Century B.C.

Materials: The στοά of Attalos was built with local Greek materials; the walls were of limestone while Hymettian and Pentelic marble were used for the columns and various features architecture.

Measuring: The στοά of Attalos is approximately 115 meters long and 20 meters wide. The columns on the ground floor are approximately 8.5 meters tall, and the columns on the upper floor are approximately 6.5 meters tall.²

Description: It was a two-story building, consisting of 21 backrooms at the eastern side, and a double colonnade in front of them, on each floor, making it a total of 42 rooms in the στοά. Some steps up to the second floor at each of the short ends of the structure.³

At the lower floor the outside colonnade was of Doric design while the inner colonnade was of Ionic design. At the upper floor, the outer colonnade was of Ionic design, while the inner colonnade was of Pergamene design. (Fig. 5a-b)⁴

Dating: The στοά was built during the reign of Attalos II of Pergamon, 159-138 B.C, as a gift from him to the demos of Athens. It was in use until its destruction by Herulians in 267 CE; There have been found coins spanning from the whole period of use in the στοά. Coins dated to the period following the structure of the στοά, and until the damage by the Herulians.⁵

Around 160-150 B.C, there were large building programs at the Athenian Αγορά; the στοά of Attalos is one well-known example of it.⁶

¹ Camp II, (1986), pp. 122-126.

² Camp II, (1986), pp. 172-175; Camp II, (2001), p. 173

³ Camp II, (1986), pp. 172-175; Camp II, (2001), p. 173

⁴ Camp II, (2003), pp. 32-33.

⁵ Camp II, (1986), pp. 172-173; Camp II, (2001), p. 173; Camp II, (2003), p. 32

⁶ Camp II, (1986), *The Athenian Agora Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens*. London, Thames and Hudson Ltd, pp. 172-179

The στοά had Lion's Head Tubes along the roof to lead the water outside the building.¹ These features have been used in the reconstruction of the Στοά, which took place from 1953 to 1956. The only mistake that was made during the reconstruction was on the Lion's Head Tubes. The tongue was forgotten, so when it rains, the lion dribble instead of throwing the water outside the building.

There is an inscribed dedication that was carved on the architrave of the στοά², The inscription tells us how King Attalos II of Pergamon gifted the στοά to the people of the city. The columns of the στοά were more widely spaced than that of most of the other Classical buildings. The lower third of the outer columns at the ground floor were unfluted while all of the inner columns were completely unfluted.³

In the Second Shop of the στοά; pottery from the last quarter of the 6th century B.C was found, while in the Shop III of the στοά; pottery from the last quarter of the 6th century and early 5th century B.C was discovered.⁴

Under the northern part of the στοά of Attalos, the remains from a square peristyle were discovered.⁵

A voting Box was found in the northwest corner of it under the στοά, In the Voting Box; a number of things were found; several ballots, a tessera and a bronze circle. This find is dated to may be the late 4th century-early 3rd century B.C. During the reconstruction of the στοά of Attalos; a number of wells were discovered and cleared out and large quantities of bones and cast from slaughter have been found in the well beneath the στοά.

The wells go back from the Geometric period (at the north end of the στοά), until the classical period (from the 5th century B.C was found at middle of στοά); while another well from the 2nd century B.C (at the southern end).⁶

The στοά of Attalos was destroyed in a Herulian raid in AD 267, but its ruins were later incorporated into the Post-Herulian Wall.⁷

¹ Camp II, (1986), pp. 172-175; Camp II, (2001), p. 173.

² Wycherley, R.E. (1957) *the Athenian Agora, Vol. III, Literary and Epigraphical Testimonia*. Princeton, New Jersey, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, p. 46.

³ Camp II, (1986), pp. 172-175.

⁴ Travlos, J., (1971), *the Athenian Agora: Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens*, Princeton University Press, pp. 202-203.

⁵ Thompson, H.A., (1954c) *Excavations in the Athenian Agora: 1953. Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 58-61.

⁶ Thompson, H.A., (1951) *Excavations in the Athenian Agora: 1950. Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp.1-51; Thompson, H.A. (1952) *Excavations in the Athenian Agora: 1951. Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 85; Thompson, H.A. (1956) *Activities in the Athenian Agora: 1955. Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 57.

⁷ Travlos, J., (1976), *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens*, Princeton University Press, p.358; Wycherley, R. E., (1978), p. 183.

Ἡ νότου Στοά II (The South Στοά II)

Location: Replaced the first South στοά

Materials: Consisted of a single colonnade in the Doric style & made of limestone.

Measuring: Length 17.72 meters (58.14 feet), Width 7.18 meters (23.56 feet), the exact height of the στοά is unknown, but it is estimated to have been around 7 meters (23 feet) tall.

Description: The στοά was a two-story building with a Doric colonnade on the front and a row of rooms behind it. The last of the buildings at the South Square to be built.

Dating: In the middle of 2nd century B.C, a few years after the middle στοά. Construction of the στοά was made of reused material from a 4th century building.¹

The second South στοά, which replaces the first South Στοά, was built a few years after the Middle στοά, around the middle of the century.²

The Στοά was situated at a slightly different angle than the first South στοά, making it running parallel with the Middle στοά, enclosing the South Square. At the east end of the South στοά, it was connected to the Middle στοά through the East Building.³

There were no backrooms in this στοά, only the wall back which bordered towards the slope at the south side of the στοά. There was a small fountain established into the back wall which was made from conglomerate faced with poros.⁴

Ἡ Μεσόγειος Στοά (The Middle Στοά)

Location: The Middle στοά ran across the square, from west to east, dividing it into two parts of unequal size. The northeast corner of the στοά was situated right next to the Panathenaic way that ran across the Αγορά. The south side of the Middle στοά was in towards the enclosed South Square.

Materials: The Middle στοά was built in limestone.

Measuring: It was the largest στοά at the Αγορά with a length of just under 150 meters.

Description: The Middle στοά is one of the buildings at the South Square, at the southern half of the Αγορά. The South Square was part of the widespread building program that took place in the middle of the 2nd century B.C. The South Square consisted of two στοαί, the South στοά II and the Middle στοά, which were connected by a third building at their short end towards the east and the Panathenaic Way.

¹ Thompson, H.A., (1954b), pp. 76-77; Camp II, (1986), pp. 175-179; Camp II, (2001), p. 182; Camp II, (2003), p. 28.

² Camp II, (1986), pp. 175-179.

³ Camp II, (1986), pp. 177-179; Camp II, (2001), p. 182; Camp II, (2003), p. 28.

⁴ Thompson, (1954b), pp. 76-77; Camp II, (1986), pp. 175-179; Camp II, (2001), p. 182; Camp II, (2003), p.28.

Dating: The Middle στοά might have been built as early as around 180 B.C. The fill building of the Middle στοά have been dated to the Hellenistic period.¹

The north side of the στοά was surrounded by a terrace. The west end of the terrace served as the site for a monument which was later exchanged with a staircase that directed up to the στοά.²

The Στοά was of Doric design with colonnades at the north and south side, and without interior walls. The Στοά had an interior central line of columns with parapets between some of them, both columns and the other structures, with a terra-cotta roof. The columns were unfluted.³

At the current Αγορά, the lower parts from a number of the columns from the colonnade belonging to the Middle στοά are still observable. At the east end of the στοά, three columns and the original steps have been found in site. At the west side, only the foundation, made of red conglomerate, is left.⁴

Throughout the excavations of the Middle στοά, an amount of lamps, pottery, coins and stamped the handles of amphora was found in the site (tell us about which city the imported amphoras created in) and a large number of coins have been found with them. These finds have various origins and implies the contacts of the wares and merchants at the Αγορά. In the Valerian wall, in the fragments built in 267 CE, there were found stone blocks from the Middle στοά, and which had been re-used as building material for the city barrier.⁵

Ἡ Στοά του Διός (The Στοά of Zeus - Eastern Στοά)

Location: Situated on the east side of the Agora, overlooking the Temple of Hephaestus and the eastern entrance to the marketplace.⁶

Its strategic location near the assembly area made it a convenient meeting point for Athenian citizens participating in political discourse and decision-making.⁷

Dating: Constructed in 425 B.C., coinciding with the height of Athenian democracy and the Periclean building program.⁸

¹ Camp II, (1986), pp. 175-179.

² Thompson, H.A. (1954b) *The Athenian Agora, A guide to the excavations*, Athens, The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, pp. 77-78; Camp II, J.McK. (1986) *The Athenian Agora Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens*. London, Thames and Hudson Ltd., pp. 175-179; Camp II, J.McK. (2001), pp. 180-182; Camp II, (2003) *the Athenian Agora – A Short Guide*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens; p. 26.

³ Camp II, (1986), pp. 175-179; Camp II, (2001), pp. 180-182; Camp II, (2003), p. 26.

⁴ Thompson, (1954b), pp. 77-78.

⁵ Thompson, (1950), pp. 317-318.

⁶ Thompson, (1947), *The Athenian Agora*, Aeschylus, 12(1), p. 147.

⁷ Hansen, M. H., (1991), *An inventory of archaic and classical poleis in Greece, Sicily, and Italy*. Oxford University Press, p.112.

⁸ Camp, (1986), p. 115.

The Stoa's close proximity to the Temple of Hephaestus, built around 449-415 B.C., suggests a similar timeframe for its construction.¹

Material: Primarily constructed from Pentelic marble, a high-quality white marble quarried from Mount Pentelikon near Athens.²

The use of marble reflected the grandeur and civic importance of the στοά, aligning with the Periclean ideal of beautification and public investment.³

Measurements: Approximately 130 meters long and 11 meters wide (39 feet), with a colonnade of 12 Doric columns on the east side and 10 Ionic columns on the west side.⁴

The Stoa's impressive size and symmetrical design contributed to its prominence within the Agora and its role as a gathering place for large crowds.⁵

Description: The στοά featured a roofed στοά (colonnaded walkway) on both sides, providing shelter from the sun and rain while offering a shaded space for public gatherings and activities.⁶

The interior likely housed rooms and offices used for administrative purposes, potentially including offices for magistrates, scribes, and other officials.⁷

The eastern side of the στοά offered a panoramic view of the Agora and the surrounding city, making it a popular spot for Athenians to socialize and observe public events.⁸

Discussion

There were a number of buildings and structures constructed at the Athenian Αγορά during the Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic period. During the Archaic period, the Royal στοά, the Alter of the 12 Gods, the Aiakeion, and the Southeast Fountain House were constructed.

During the Classical period, the Royal στοά, the στοά Poikile, the Apollo Patroos, the Hephaesteion, the Bouleuterion, the Tholos, the Southwest Fountain House, the South στοά I, and the Mint were constructed. During the Hellenistic period, the Metroon, the Eponymos Heroes, the στοά of Attalos, the Middle στοά, the South στοά II, and the East Building were constructed.

During the early 5th century B.C, Kimon/Cimon are said to have beautified the Αγορά by planting plane trees there. At the southern part of the Αγορά, at the site right next to the northwest corner of the Middle στοά, there were a number of buildings. This

¹ Ericksen, T., (2004), An Athenian archaism, The Stoa of Zeus in the Agora. *Hesperia*, 73(1), p. 118

² Brüning, C., (1993), The agora of Athens, Routledge, p. 127.

³ Rahe, P., (1997), The Periclean democracy, A reassessment, *The Journal of Politics*, 59(2), p. 132.

⁴ Travlos, J., (1971), p. 178.

⁵ Camp, (1986), p. 116.

⁶ Hansen, M.H., (1991), p.112.

⁷ Ericksen, T., (2004), p. 118

⁸ Brüning, (1993), p. 128

site was originally just outside of the original borders of the Αγορά, as bordered by the Horos stones. One of these buildings has been identified as housing a cobblers' shop. A number of hobnails and bone rings used in the making of shoes and sandals have been found in it. The finds date to the late 5th century B.C. At the southwest corner of the site, between the locations of the Tholos and the middle Στοά, and towards to Areopagus Hill, just outside the boundary of the Αγορά, a number of buildings were located. Several of the buildings encroached on the border and partially onto the Αγορά. These buildings have been associated as private houses, some serving as shops and workshops, which the house of Simon is an example of. This area has been considered as an industrial area due to the large number of buildings associated with marble working, pottery and metal working.

The function of these buildings has been identified in the archaeological material and the remaining structures found during the excavations. The buildings have been dated to two phases: The first one, the 5th century B.C. During the excavations, a number of wells and drainage channels were uncovered. Pottery from the 1st half of the 4th century B.C was found in one of the wells. It has been more closely dated to c. 383 B.C based on the inscription.

The Στοά, an open-fronted colonnade, served as a practical and ornamental element in various Greek buildings. However, it also existed as a standalone structure, attached to open spaces rather than other buildings. This reflected the Greek tendency to conduct most political and religious activities in the open air. Στοαι provided a covered area at the fringes of open spaces, offering shade and protection while maintaining an open-air feel. Independent στοαι have a long history, dating back to early archaic times and appearing in shrines like those at Samos. By the 5th century, these στοαι became ubiquitous in Greek cities, particularly in Αγορά. Various designs emerged, with examples of most found in Athens. Even early στοαι had increased depth through internal rows of columns and rooms built behind the colonnade, emphasizing their independent nature. στοαι served diverse purposes, mirroring the multifaceted functions of the Αγορά itself. The architectural design of the colonnades played a crucial role in determining the character of an Αγορά. Pausanias notes contrasting styles: the old-fashioned one with independent στοαί and the Ionian one with στοαι joined together.

Athens largely remained with the old-fashioned style, despite some modernization in the Hellenistic period. The archaic Αγορά had at least one simple στοά. Several more were built independently in the 5th century, likely with diverse designs. One such στοά, described earlier, featured a row of rooms for magistrates' offices. While Athens ultimately gathered a diverse collection of στοαι, even the Hellenistic group

on the south lacked the compact uniformity of the Ionian plan. Furthermore, this group served a separate, seemingly specialized purpose. (Fig. 6) ¹

Conclusion

The Evolution of Athenian στοαί from the 5th to the 2nd century B.C:

Architecture

Athenian στοαί were relatively simple in design during the 5th century B.C. They were typically made of stone or brick, and had Doric or Ionic columns. Early στοαί were typically single-story, with a flat or sloping roof.

In the 4th century B.C; Athenian στοαί became more complex and sophisticated. Columns became more elegant, and στοαί began to use more expensive materials, such as marble. Στοαί also became taller, with the introduction of multi-story στοαί

In the 3rd century B.C, Athenian στοαί continued to evolve. Στοαί became more ornate, with the introduction of decorations such as colored stucco and sculptures. Στοαί also became more functional, with their use for purposes such as schools and temples.

Decoration:

In addition to developments in architecture, Athenian στοαί also saw an evolution in decoration.

In the 5th century B.C, decoration in στοαί was typically relatively simple. Columns were often decorated with simple motifs, such as lines or simple reliefs.

In the 4th century B.C, decoration in στοαί became more complex. Columns were decorated with more complex motifs, such as landscapes or mythological scenes. Στοαί also became more colorful, with the use of colored stucco to add a touch of vibrancy.

In the 3rd century B.C, decoration in Athenian στοαί continued to evolve. Decoration became more detailed and realistic, with the use of sculptures and paintings to add a touch of luxury.

Historical Significance:

Athenian στοαί were an essential part of public life in ancient Greece. They were used for a variety of purposes, and served as centers for social, economic, and political activity. Στοαί were also a symbol of strength and prosperity in Greek civilization.

The evolution of Athenian στοαί from the 5th to the 2nd century B.C reflects the changing needs and priorities of Greek society. As Greek civilization became more complex and sophisticated, Στοαί became more elaborate and functional. Στοαί also

¹ Camp II, (2003), p.3

became more widespread, with their use extending beyond Athens to other parts of the Greek world.

Αγορά remained a vibrant public space throughout Hellenistic and Roman times (Fig. 7-8),¹ this vision undermines the prevailing view that the increasing monumentality and enclosure of the Αγορά in post-Classical times must be read as symptoms of Αγορά decline.

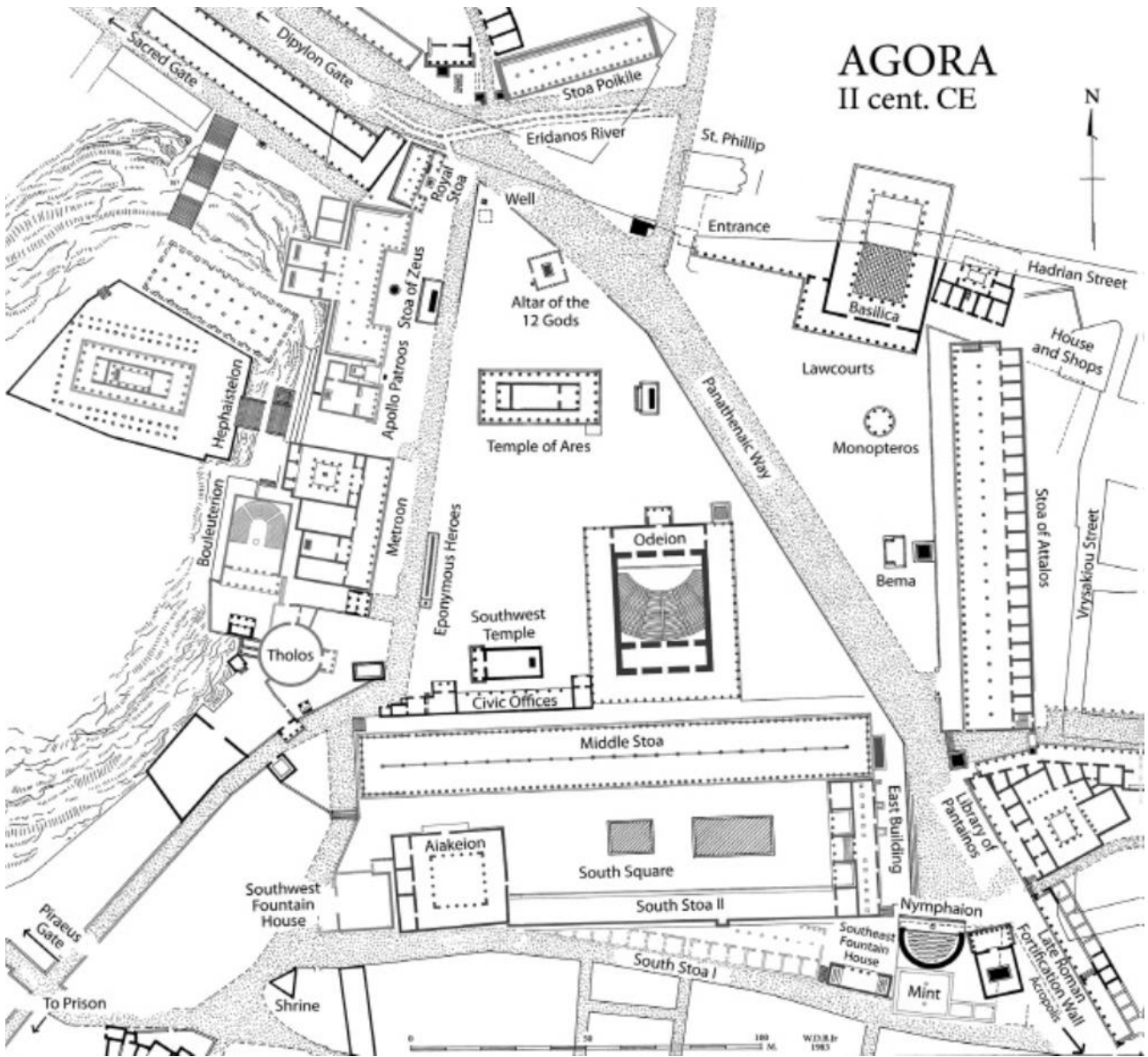
The Αγορά deserves the attention of historians because it offers anew perspective from which to investigate the important issue of how local power relations were shaped in the Hellenistic and Roman period polis.

References:

- Brüning, C., (1993), *The agora of Athens*, Routledge.
- Camp II, J.McK., (1986), *Athenian Agora excavations in 1985*. *Hesperia*, 55(2), pp. 111-124.
- Camp II, J.McK., (1986), *The Athenian Agora Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens*, London, Thames and Hudson Ltd., pp. 175-179.
- Camp II, J.McK., (2001), *The Archaeology of Athens*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, pp. 180-182.
- Camp II, J.McK., (2003), *The Athenian Agora - A Short Guide*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens; p. 26.
- Camp II, J.McK., (2003), *The Athenian Agora*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens In collaboration with the Pack and Humanities Institute, Picture Book No. 16, p.33.
- Coulton J. J., (1976), *The Architectural Development of the Greek Stoa*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, pp. 1-3.
- Ehrenberg V., (1958), *Greek City-States*, Methuen & Co., Ltd.
- Ericksen, T., (2004), *An Athenian archaism, The Stoa of Zeus in the Agora*. *Hesperia*, 73(1), 117-131.
- Hansen H. T., (1991), *The Athenian Agora*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, p. 115.
- Martin R., (1953), *Recherches sur l'agora grecque, Études d'histoire et d'architecture urbaines*, In *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, pp. 449-502.
- Michael G., (1992), *Athens and Ancient Greece*, Routledge, pp. 78-79.

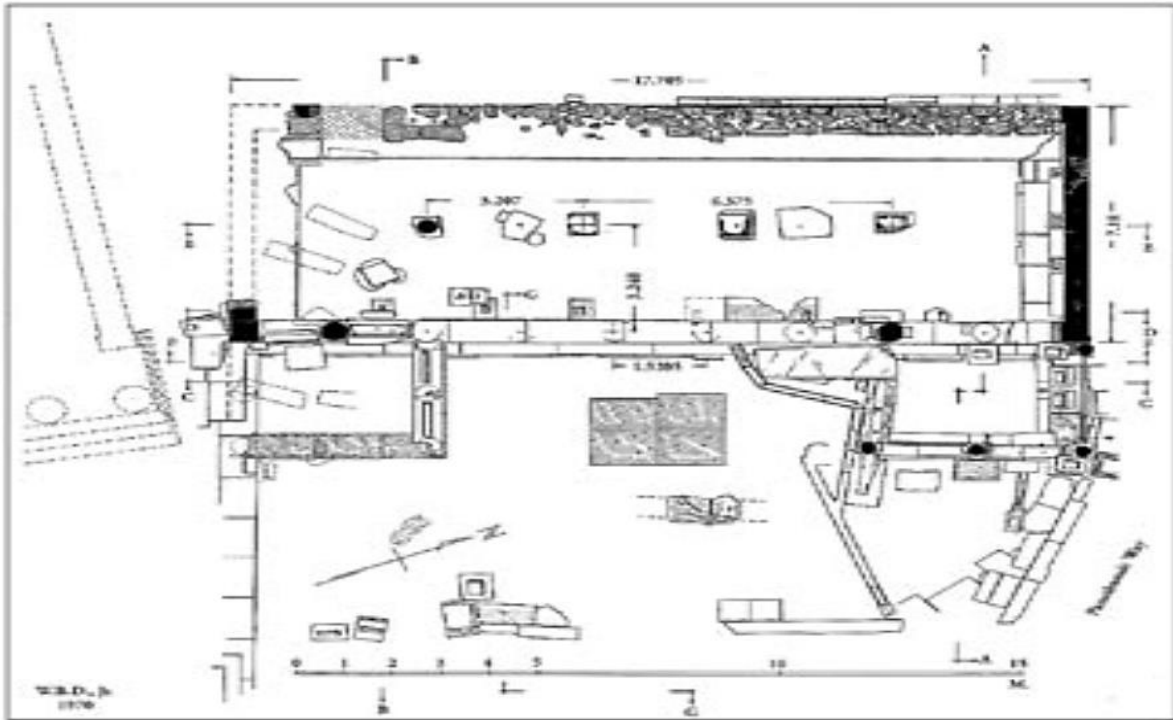
¹ Camp II, (2003), p.40; Christopher P. Dickenson , (1980), *On the Agora, The Evolution of a Public Space in Hellenistic and Roman Greece (c. 323 B.C – 267 AD)*, Leiden, Boston, Vol. 398, 1880, p.71.

- Miller S. G., (2003), *The Ancient Greek Market: Economics, Institutions, and Society*, Princeton University Press.
- Morris, I., & A. R. Knodell, (2015), *Greek Cities in the First Millennium B.C, in the Cambridge World History, Vol. 3, Early Cities in Comparative Perspective, 4000 B.C- CE 1200*, edited by N. Yoffee, 343-363, Cambridge University Press, p.362.
- Rahe P., (1997), *The Periclean democracy: A reassessment*, *The Journal of Politics*, 59(2), pp. 477-516.
- Shear J.r., (1997), *The Athenian agora, Excavations 1989-1993*, *Hesperia*, 66.4.
- Thompson, H.A., (1947), *The Athenian Agora, Aeschylus*, 12(1), pp. 145-160.
- Thompson, H.A., (1951), *Excavations in the Athenian Agora: 1950*. *Hesperia, The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp.1-51.
- Thompson, H.A., (1952), *Excavations in the Athenian Agora: 1951*. *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 85
- Thompson, H.A., (1954b), *The Athenian Agora, A guide to the excavations*, Athens, The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, pp. 77-78.
- Thompson, H.A., (1954c), *Excavations in the Athenian Agora: 1953*. *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 58-61.
- Thompson, H.A., (1956), *Activities in the Athenian Agora, 1955*. *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 57.
- Thompson, H. A., (1957), *Excavations in the Athenian Agora: Vol. IX, Part I*, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, pp. 153-156
- Traill J. S., (1978), *The Agora of Athens*, Princeton University Press, p. 32.
- Travlos, J., (1971), *Pictorial dictionary of ancient Athens*, Thames and Hudson. p. 132.
- Wycherley, R.E., (1957), *The Athenian Agora, Vol. III – Literary and Epigraphical Testimonia*, Princeton, New Jersey, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, p. 46.
- Wycherley R. E., (1969), *How the Greeks Built Cities*, pp. 110-119.
- Wycherley R. E., (1978), *The stoa of Zeus in the Agora of Athens*, Princeton University Press, p.49.



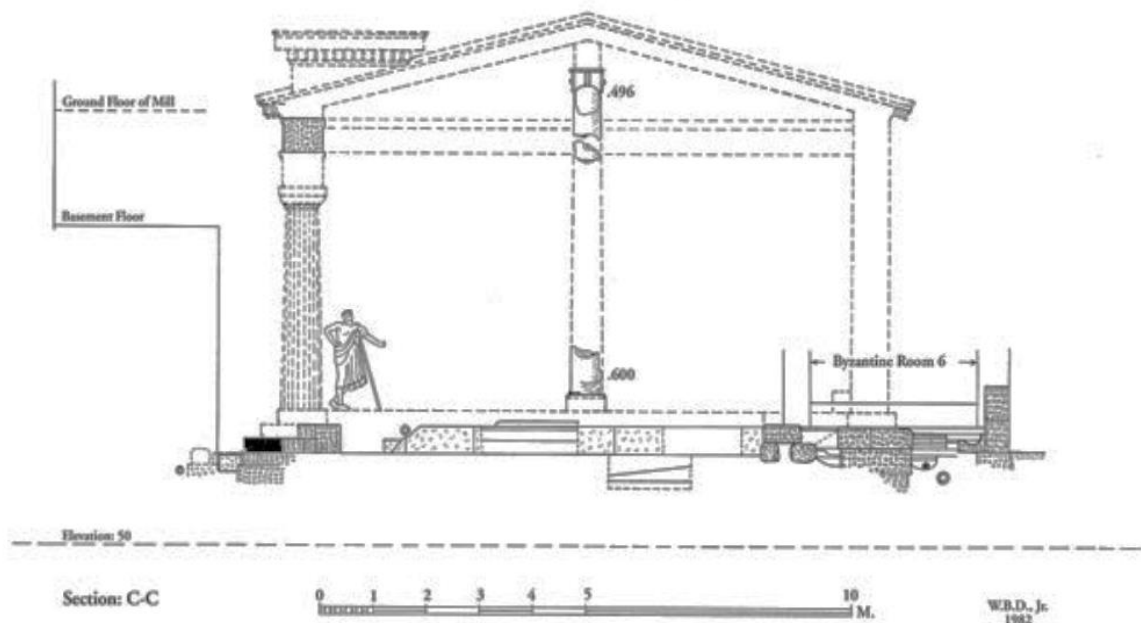
(Fig. 1) Plan of the Athenian Ἀγορά, showing buildings of the Archaic through Roman periods
(Agora Excavations, American School of Classical Studies)

(Morris, I. & A. R. Knodell, (2015), Greek Cities in the First Millennium B.C. In the Cambridge World History, Vol. 3, Early Cities in Comparative Perspective, 4000 B.C- CE 1200, edited by N. Yoffee, 343-363, Cambridge University Press, p.362)



(Fig. 2) Actual state plan of the Royal Στοά

(John Mck. Camp II, (2003), Picture Book No. 16, p.41)



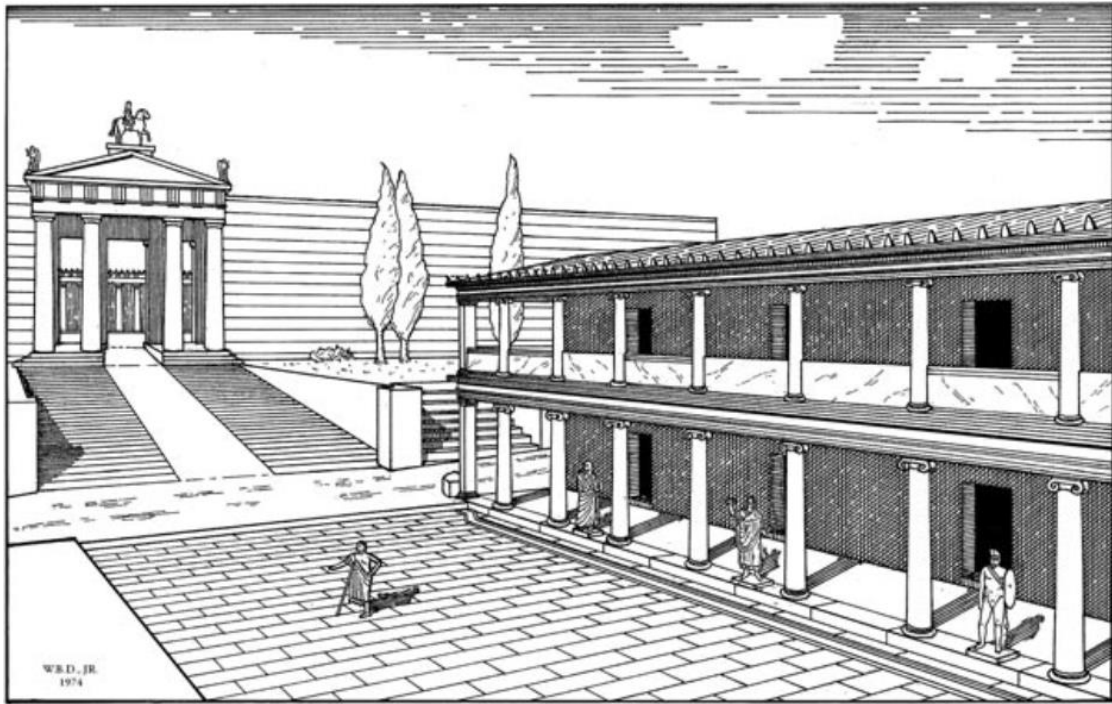
(Fig. 3) Cross section of the Στοά Poikile, with Doric columns outside
Ionic within 470–460 B.C

(Camp II, (2003), picture book No. 16, p.44)



(Fig. 4) Reconstructed drawing of the west end of the Στοά Poikile
As it would have appeared in about 400 B.C

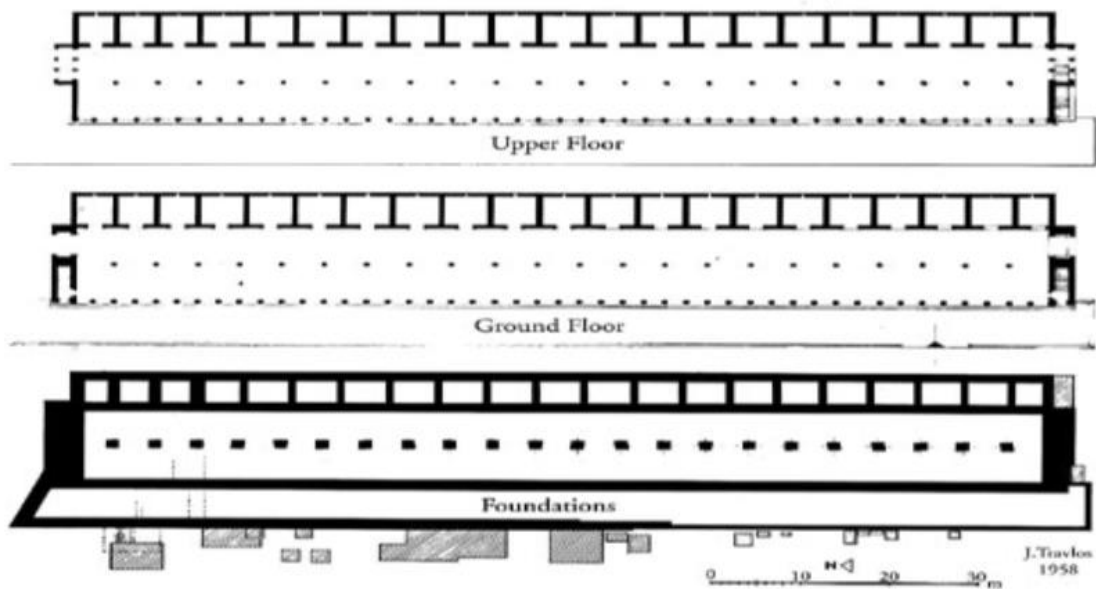
(Camp II, (2003), Picture Book No. 16, p.44)



(Fig. 5/a) Reconstruction of the marble-paved street and Στοά of the complex east of the Στοά of Attalos, ca. A.D. 420.

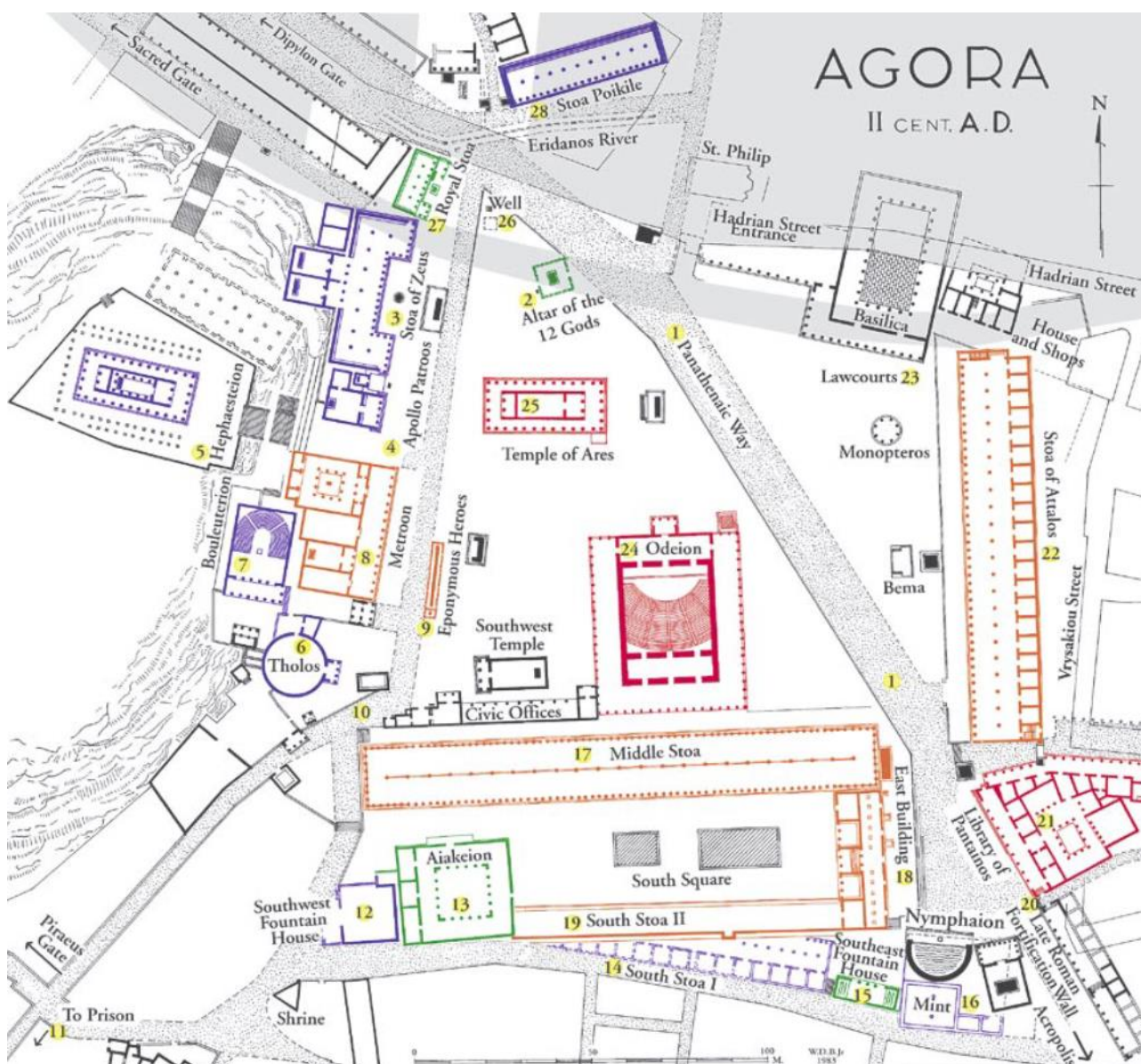
At left is the Gate of Athena, the entrance to the Roman Αγορά

(Camp II, (2003), p.32)



(Fig. 5/b) Plans of the Στοά of Attalos, 159–138 B.C

(Camp II, (2003), p.33)

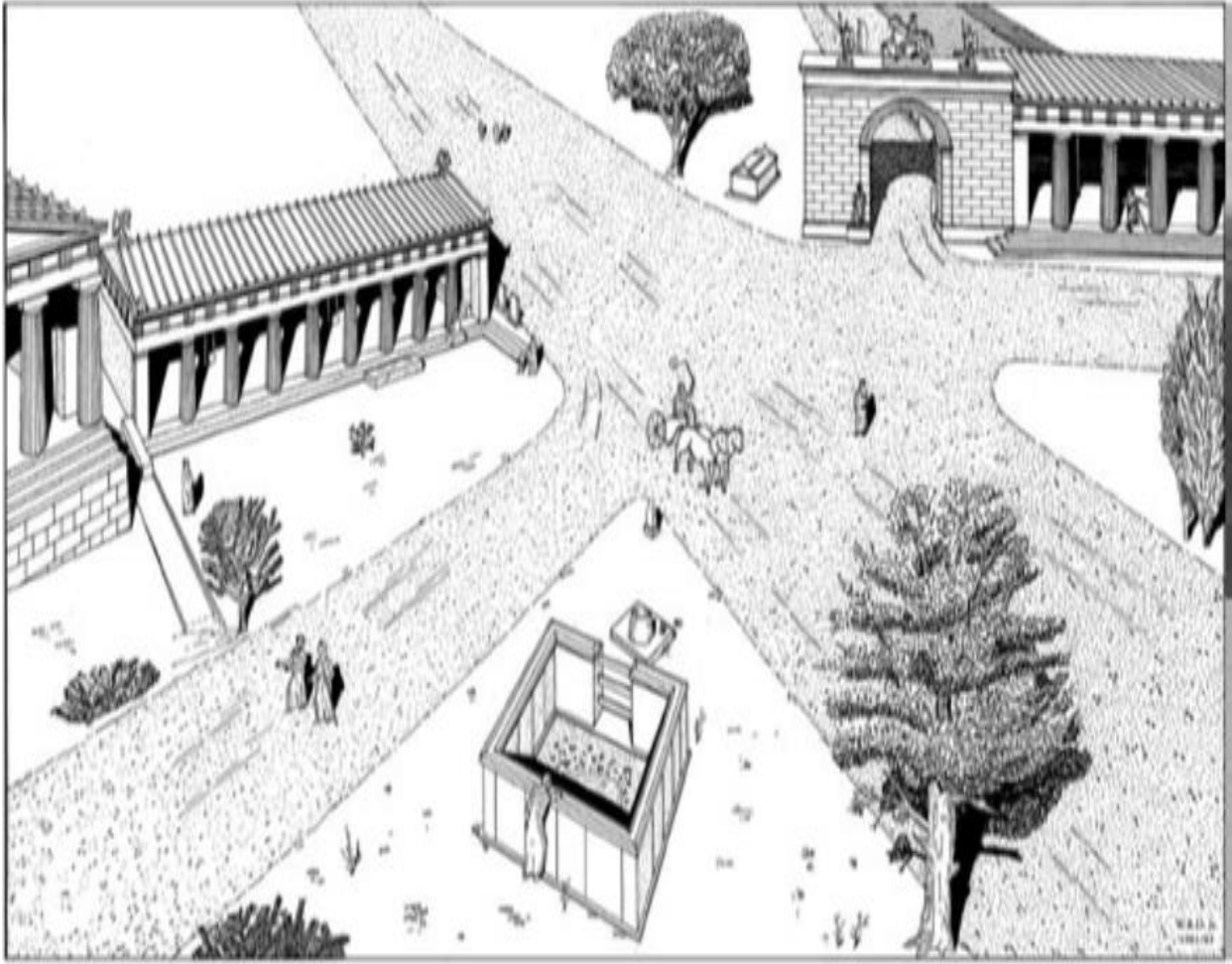


(Fig. 6) Plan of the Αγορά at the height of its development in ca. A.D. 150.

(Camp II, (2003), p.3)

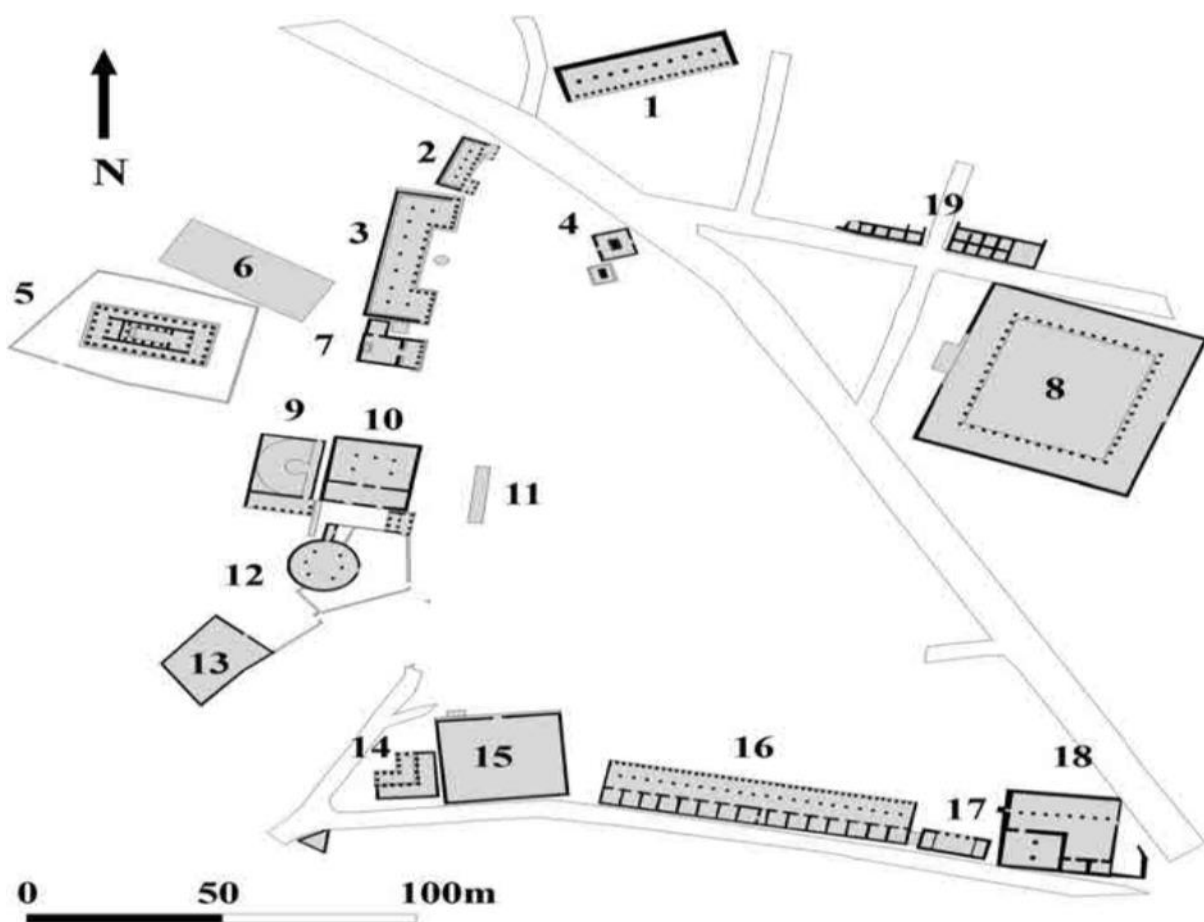
The Keys of Plan:

Green	Archaic
Blue	Classical
Pink	Hellenistic
Red	Roman
Yellow	Monument Numbers



(Fig. 7) A reconstruction of the northwest corner of the Αγορά in 420 B.C., with the Royal Στοά at left and the Painted Στοά at the upper right, looking northwest

(Camp II, (2003), p.40)



(Fig. 8) The Athenian Αγορά c. 300 B.C

(Christopher P. Dickenson, (1980), On the Agora, the Evolution of a Public Space in Hellenistic and Roman Greece (c. 323 B.C – 267 AD), Leiden, Boston, Vol. 398, p. 71)

1	Painted Στοά	7	Temple of Apollo Patroos	13	Strategies
2	Στοά Basileios	8	Square Peristyle Building	14	Southwest Fountainhouse
3	Στοά of Zeus Eleutherios	9	New Bouleuterion	15	Aiakeion
4	Altar of the Twelve Gods	10	Old Bouleuterion	16	South Στοά
5	Hephaisteion	11	Monument of the Eponymous Heroes	17	Southeast Fountainhouse
6	Arsenal	12	Tholos	18	Mint