CHAPTER 1

Introduction: From 'South Agora' to 'Place of Palms'

Andrew Wilson and Ben Russell

The Aphrodisian complex that has been known since the 1930s as the 'South Agora' occupies a low, flat area in the centre of the city, between the southern flank of the Agora and the northern edge of the Theatre Hill (Fig. 1). In its most extensive form it was a large public piazza, surrounded on four sides by a combination of stoas and public buildings, with a monumental pool running down its centre (Pl. 1.A–B; Pl. 2.A). Rather than a single structure, it is a mosaic of different buildings which gave it the appearance of increasing unity over time. These constituent elements are the open area of the piazza itself and its pool, the stoas along the north, west, and south sides, and the monumental façade known as the 'Agora Gate' at its east end (Fig. 2). This was a nodal point in the urban plan of Aphrodisias: the Basilica opens on to the southern side of the space at its western end, the Hadrianic 'Olympian' Baths lie just to the west of the complex (Pl. 2.B), the Agora (sometimes called the 'North Agora') to its north, and the Theatre was accessible via a staircase off the eastern end of its south side (Pl. 3.A–B).

Since the labels assigned to the various elements of the complex have evolved over time, here we propose standardizing them: the stoas we refer to throughout as the North Stoa (previously the 'Portico of Tiberius'), West Stoa, and South Stoa, and the 'Agora Gate' as the Propylon; the choice of *stoa* and *propylon* is driven by the fact that the inscriptions on the monuments themselves use these terms. Our decision to dispense with the term 'South Agora' requires further explanation, given in sections D and F below.

A. EARLY INVESTIGATIONS, 18TH–20TH CENTURIES

The first reference in scholarship to the area occupied by the so-called 'South Agora' can be found in Richard Pococke's description of central Aphrodisias, which he visited in 1740. In this passage, which is quoted in full in the later publication of the Society of Dilettanti's expedition, Pococke notes that the space between the Theatre and the Temple (which he identified as that of Bacchus) was filled with colonnaded spaces: 'I saw remains of such pillars extending [from the Temple] to the Theatre and the other temple [probably the Hadrianic Baths], all which were probably covered, and made spacious shady walks for the great number of people that resorted to this place…'.[1]

Pococke's account includes no images of the site but the British expedition to Aphrodisias in 1813, sponsored by the Society of Dilettanti in London, spent considerable time documenting the monuments of the city centre. These were published in the third volume of their *Antiquities of Ionia* in 1840.[2] This expedition identified the series of columns noted by Pococke as the remains of the Agora, which they reconstructed as a rectangular piazza ringed by porticoes with interior colonnades on four sides.[3] Beyond these porticoes they proposed the existence of a further, outward-facing portico. While they were correct to assign most of these colonnades to the Agora, the columns that they interpreted as an external portico are actually those of the North Stoa of the 'South Agora'. This is confirmed by the fact that the 'Order of the Columns of the Exterior Portico of the Agora' depicted in Plate VI in the Society of Dilettanti volume includes a mask-and-garland frieze of the sort found in the 'South Agora' (Pl. 4.A), while the 'Elevation of the Portico of the Agora' in Plate V has a frieze of putti-and-garlands of the sort used in the Agora.[4] That there was some difficulty distinguishing between the columns of the two stoas is further shown by a comment in the caption to Plate V, which notes that some of the columns assigned to the Agora were inscribed with the name of ΚΛ. ΑΝΤΩΝΙΑ, which is true of two shafts from the North Stoa of the 'South Agora' but none in the Agora proper (see Ch. 3 §D).[5] Plate VI in the Society of Dilettanti publication, therefore, is the earliest representation we have of the architecture of this complex.

Of the various other nineteenth-century visitors to the ruins of Aphrodisias, Charles Texier and Charles Fellows add little to the picture sketched out by Pococke and the Society of Dilettanti expedition with regard to this space; they again identify just one agora, with an Ionic colonnade.[6] Alexandre Laborde, however, shows two views of the area of the Agora, one facing North that shows two columns of the North Stoa of the 'South Agora' with the Agora itself beyond.[7] A second image shows the standing columns at the South-East corner of the Agora facing South, with the retaining wall of the Theatre Hill in the background (Pl. 4.B).[8]

1 Pococke 1745, 69–70.

2 Society of Dilettanti 1840, 45–74.
3 Society of Dilettanti 1840, ch. II, Pl. IV.
4 Society of Dilettanti 1840, ch. II, Pl. V & VI.
5 Society of Dilettanti 1840, 64.
6 Texier 1849, 164–165; Fellows 1852, 251–257.
7 Laborde 1838, 98, Pl. LVII, 112.
8 Laborde 1838, 98, Pl. LVII, 111.

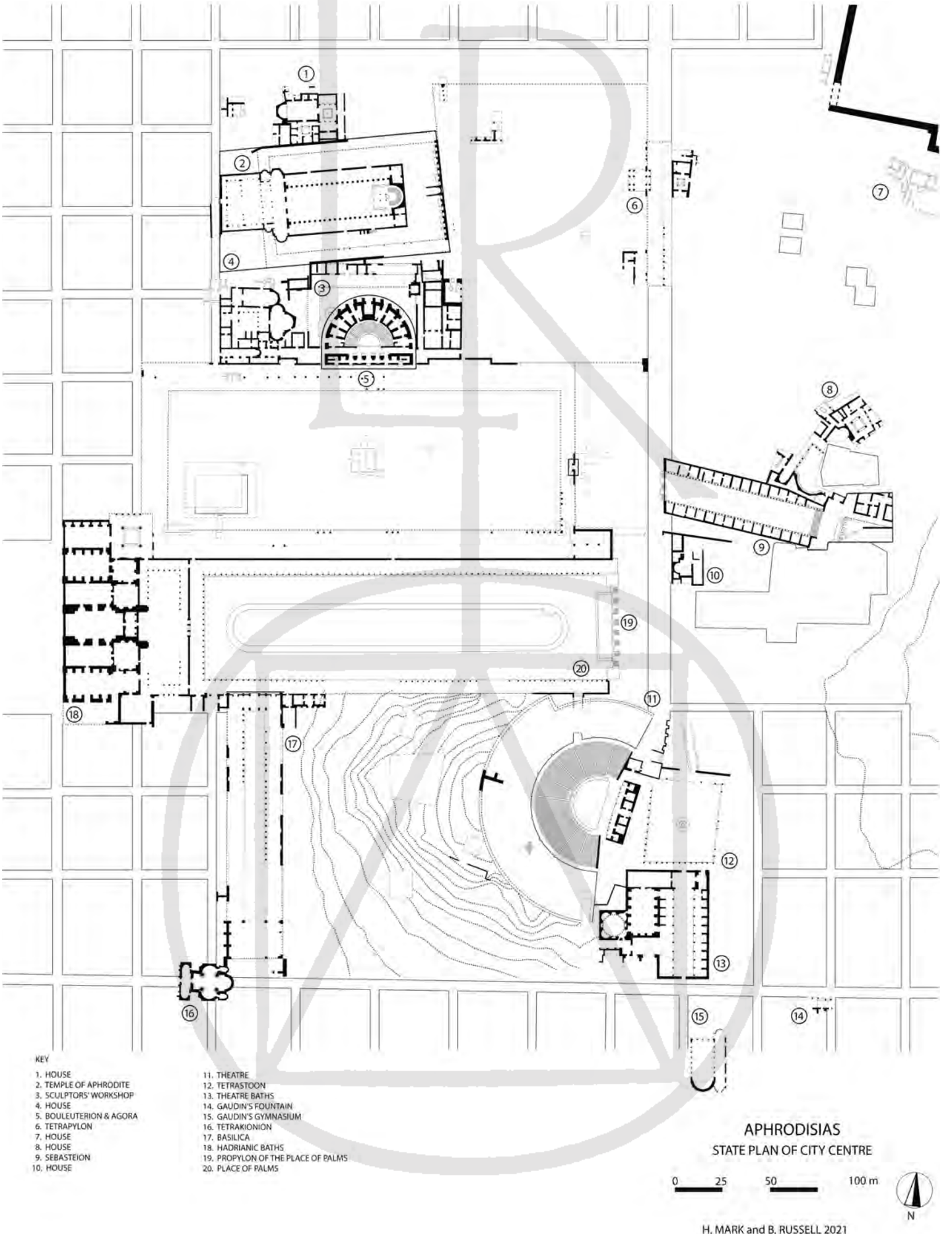

Fig. 1. State plan of the city centre of Aphrodisias.

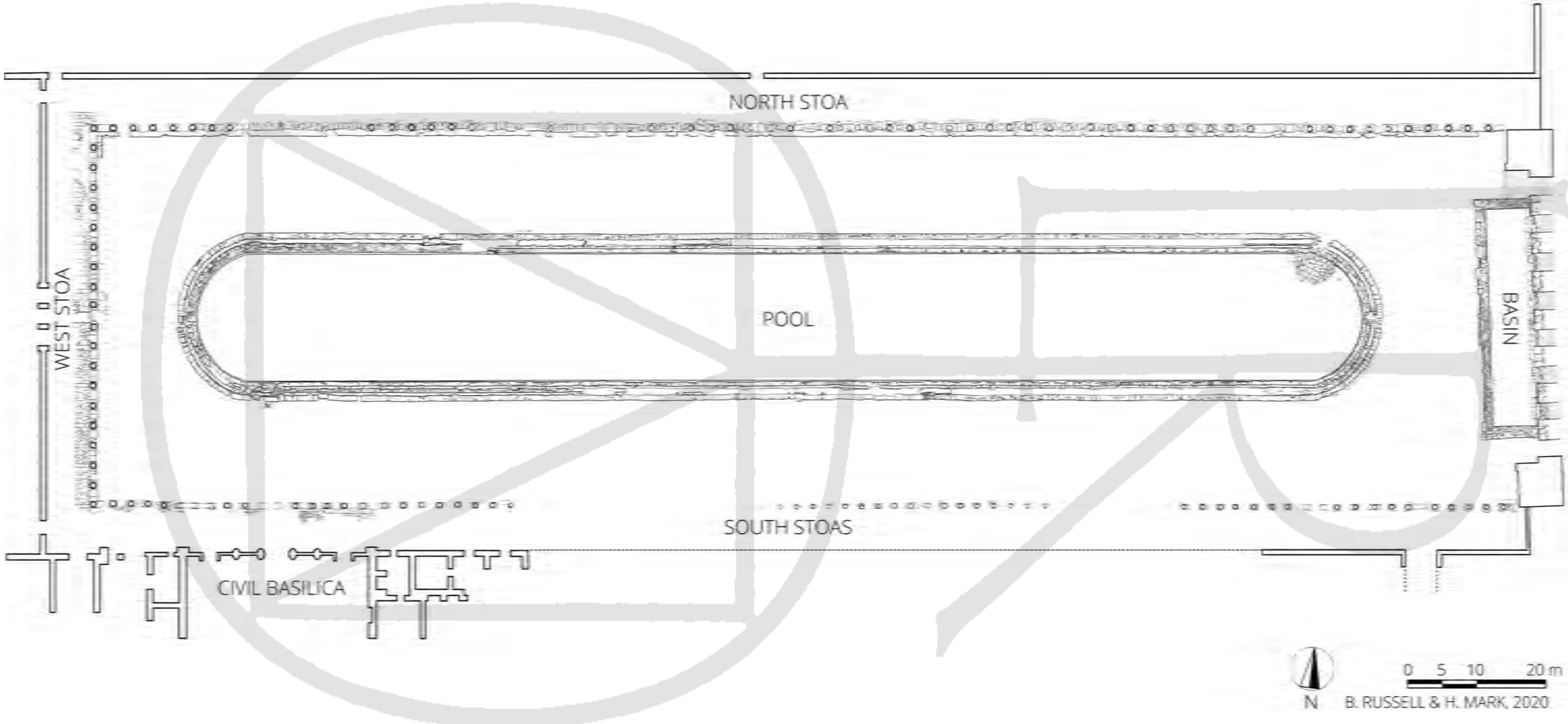

Fig. 2. State plan of the Place of Palms.

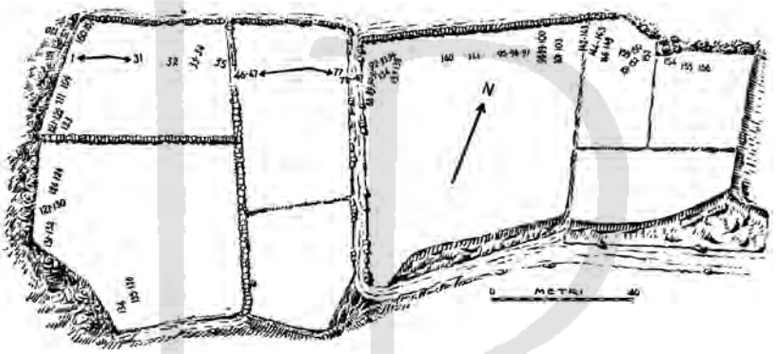

Fig. 3. Plan of mask-and-garland findspots, as documented by Jacopi in 1937.

B. THE FIRST EXCAVATIONS, 1904–1905 AND 1937

The first excavations in the vicinity of the 'South Agora' were undertaken in 1904 and 1905, under the direction of Paul Gaudin and Gustave Mendel.[9] These concentrated on the Hadrianic Baths but extended as far east as the front of the West Stoa, which was at that point designated the 'Galerie de l'Est' of the Baths.[10] André Boulanger continued this work in the Hadrianic Baths in 1913 but did not venture any further to the east than Gaudin and Mendel.[11]

Excavations to the east of the Hadrianic Baths were eventually picked up by the Missione Archeologica Italiana in Anatolia in 1937, led by Giulio Jacopi.[12] Recognising the importance of the structures earlier identified, the Italian mission continued the excavations of the West Stoa and found its connection to the North Stoa; they then exposed *c.* 25 m of the latter and found most of the architectural elements in the position in which they had fallen (Fig. 3).[13]

The Italian team also found the architrave blocks with the dedicatory inscription on, as well as a substantial quantity of mask-and-garland frieze blocks.[14] This inscription showed that the building was dedicated to Aphrodite, the divine Augustus, Tiberius, Livia, and the *demos* at some point between AD 14 and 29, by a certain Diogenes son of Menandros (see Ch. 2 §A; Pl. 10.B). The structure has since become known as the 'Portico of Tiberius', despite the fact that the inscription specifically calls the building a 'stoa' and Tiberius was just one of the dedicatees.

Luigi Crema, who was responsible for the architectural analysis on this project, provided a detailed description of the architecture of the North Stoa and oversaw the taking of a series of casts of two columns and their entablature for the Museo della Civiltà Romana in EUR, Rome.[15] Crema also documented the architecture of the main colonnade of the West Stoa and observed the presence of a further colonnade along the south side of the piazza, the South Stoa (which we identify as multiple stoas), for the first time.[16] He proposed that the colonnades along the north, west and south sides of the space would have incorporated 175 columns, rising to 189 if there was also a stoa along the east side.[17] Considering that he was estimating the lengths of the structures he was fairly close: the total was probably *c.* 170–172 by the time the late antique South Stoa was added to the space (see Ch. 4 §F): 70 in the North Stoa, 20 in the West Stoa, and *c.* 80–82 in the South Stoa, depending on whether the two late antique parts of the latter had a gap between them or not.

Jacopi was the first to identify this complex as a commercial agora, and labelled it the 'South Agora' to distinguish it from the main Agora to the north; this name has been used in much of the subsequent literature.[18] Crema, however, noted in the same publication that the designation of this space as an agora was specious.[19] He raised the possibility that it could have functioned as part of a bath-gymnasium complex along with the Hadrianic Baths, but pointed out that it could only have been planned as such if a pre-Hadrianic bathhouse was located on the same site, for which there is currently no evidence. Here Crema referenced Silvio Ferri's brief note, published a year earlier, which proposed a possible connection between the epigraphically-attested Gymnasium of Diogenes (*Diogenianon*) and the recently-excavated North Stoa, which was dedicated by a Diogenes.[20] In the end, Crema argued against this proposal; the 'South Agora', he concluded, would have been simply too large a gymnasium for a city of this size, could not have been built directly with the Hadrianic Baths, and was connected to too many other structures to be a suitable venue for athletics. He left open the possibility, however, that excavations at the east end of the complex might shed new light on the function of the complex; a temple in this zone, he reasoned, would make this space appear much more like a Roman forum—a 'Foro di Tiberio'—than a traditional agora.

9 On these excavations Collignon 1904; 1906; Mendel 1906; Erim 1987, 8.
10 Mendel 1906, 159 (pl. 1), 164.
11 Boulanger 1914.
12 Jacopi 1939.
13 Crema 1939, 284.
14 Jacopi 1939, 85–96.
15 Crema 1939, 284–288, fig. 51–53.
16 Crema 1939, 288–292 (South Stoa), 292–295 (West Stoa).
17 Crema 1939, 295.
18 Jacopi 1939, 95–96; a view followed by Erim 1970, 92; Waelkens 1987; de Chaisemartin 1987.
19 Crema 1939, 296–304.
20 Ferri 1938, 59–60; the inscription is *CIG* II, 2782.

C. EXCAVATIONS BETWEEN 1969 AND 1991

Systematic excavations in the 'South Agora' were resumed by the New York University project, under the direction of Kenan Erim, in 1969. By this date the entire space, as opposed to just the North Stoa, had become generally referred to as the 'Portico of Tiberius'; this is the term used on the excavation notebooks for this sector of the city.

In 1969, work concentrated on the West Stoa and on its connection with the South Stoa, the existence of which Crema had first noted (Pl. 4.C).[21] It was in this year that much of the fallen colonnade and especially the inscriptions mentioning Albinos' restoration works were documented (see Ch. 4 §D).[22] In 1970 and 1971 the excavators worked from west to east along the line of the South Stoa and here encountered the façade of the Basilica and numerous panels of Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices that had been inscribed on it.[23] These discoveries convinced Erim that the 'Portico [of Tiberius] was indeed part of the marketplace of the city', as Jacopi had originally proposed. In 1972, during further work on the Basilica and its relationship with the 'South Agora', Erim was able to conclude that what remains of the South Stoa was late antique and that originally the Basilica did not have a colonnade along its front.[24]

Much of the northern half of the West Stoa, an area partially excavated already in the early twentieth century, was then cleaned in 1974 and 1975.[25] In 1984 the southern half of the structure was cleaned and a trench opened at its northern end, where it joins the North Stoa.[26] Finally, in 1988 a sondage was excavated by Ali Önce in the north-west corner of the open area of the complex, which showed that the West Stoa's sub-structures abutted those of the North Stoa, confirming that it was later.[27] The latter building was fully excavated between 1984 and 1985.[28] The excavations in 1984 confirmed that much of the architecture of the North Stoa lay where it had fallen: 'it is clear that some of the column drums have been scattered a little, yet many of them are more or less in the vicinity of their original location, along with capitals, architrave and occasionally frieze fragments' (Pl. 4.D–E).[29] Three carved marble seats were also found in the North Stoa 'neatly aligned at one point in front of the backwall of the portico.'[30] The re-erection of the fragments of the North Stoa's colonnade was also begun in 1985.[31]

In 1975, while work was going on in the West Stoa, investigations at the other end of the complex discovered the Propylon.[32] Excavation of this structure continued in 1977 and 1980, when a number of the late antique interventions, including the inscriptions mentioning Ampelios and Doulkitios, were first found (Pl. 5.A).[33] These discoveries, and the excavation of a large basin in front of the structure (see Pl. 58.A–B), led Erim to propose that the Propylon was turned into a *nymphaeum* in late antiquity, an interpretation that was accepted until recently. The structure continued to be excavated between 1983 and 1987.[34] At the same time, work resumed on the south side of the 'South Agora', and in 1984 the stairway up to the Theatre was identified.[35]

Much of the eastern end of the South Stoa, and a substantial section of its centre, was excavated in 1986 and many of its columns re-erected (Pl. 5.B).[36] Erim astutely dated this stoa to late antiquity, proposing the fifth century specifically, and concluded that 'the south flank of the Portico of Tiberius [that is, the 'South Agora'] was either not completed in early Imperial times, or thoroughly overhauled or rebuilt after serious damage caused by the late fourth century earthquake.'[37]

While most of the excavations conducted in the 1970s and early 1980s in the 'South Agora' concentrated on the structures around the edge of this space, several trenches did touch on its interior area. Those carried out in 1984 at its western end discovered that the original ground level was much lower than the stylobates of the surrounding stoas. Erim concluded that the ground level had been raised in late antiquity and the excavators identified a series of terracotta pipes laid in this fill.[38] These interventions were connected by Erim to a supposed fourth-century earthquake and restoration work in its wake. Excavations

21 Erim 1970, 92–93; Nbk 76: *NE Nymphaeum / SW Portico of Tiberius* (S. Kulaklı, 1969).

22 See also Erim 1975, 78.

23 Erim 1972, 58–59; 1973, 65–66; see Nbk 82–84: *Baths of Hadrian/ Portico of Tiberius, Books 1–3* (S. Crawford and J. Gary, 1970); Nbk 85: *Portico of Tiberius: Catalogue of Architectural Finds* (S. Crawford and J. Gary, 1970); Nbk 100–102: *Portico of Tiberius, Books 1–3* (P.F.M. Zahl, 1971).

24 Erim 1974, 41; Nbk 134–137: *Portico of Tiberius/'Basilica', 1–4* (P. McDermott, 1972).

25 See Nbk 153: *W Portico of Tiberius* (1974); Nbk 164: *SE Corner Tetrastoon (Piazza); E Tetrastoon; E Theatre Baths (Aula Thermale); Clearing Portico of Tiberius* (A.A.W.J., K.T. Erim, 1975).

26 Erim 1985, 180; see Nbk 256: *N Portico of Tiberius, Book 1* (N. de Chaisemartin and T. Çıkış, 1984); Nbk 257: *N Portico of Tiberius, Book 2* (T. Çıkış, 1984).

27 Nbk 300: *Portico of Tiberius NCE I* (A. Önce, 1988), 5; noted in de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 153.

28 Erim 1985, 180; see Nbk 256: *N Portico of Tiberius, Book 1* (N. de Chaisemartin and T. Çıkış, 1984); Nbk 257: *N Portico of Tiberius, Book 2* (T. Çıkış, 1984).

29 Nbk 259: *Portico of Tiberius: North-Central East* (K. Erim, 1984), 3; for photographs showing the collapsed colonnade, see Nbk 269: *Portico of Tiberius NE II, Book 2* (A. Önce, 1985), 2; Nbk 272: *Portico of Tiberius: North-Central East 1985* (K. Erim and J. Gorence, 1985), 60.

30 Erim 1986a, 179; see Nbk 268: *Portico of Tiberius NCE I; NE I; NE II, Book 1* (A. Önce, 1985), 13; Nbk 272: *Portico of Tiberius: North-Central East 1985* (K. Erim and J. Gorence, 1985), 54.

31 On work in the North Stoa in 1985, see also Nbk 269: *Portico of Tiberius NE II, Book 2* (A. Önce, 1985); Nbk 270: *Portico of Tiberius NE III; NE IV* (A. Önce, 1985); Nbk 272: *Portico of Tiberius: North-Central East 1985* (K. Erim and J. Gorence, 1985).

32 Erim 1976, 28–29; restoration Erim 1984, 206; 1985, 179.

33 Erim 1981, 180–181.

34 Erim 1984; Nbk 253: *S Agora Gate I-84, Book 1* (B. Rose, 1984); Nbk 254: *S Agora Gate I-84, Book 2, also containing I-85* (B. Rose and A. Önce, 1984); Nbk 280: *E Agora Gate* (S. Doruk, 1986); Nbk 287: *Agora Gate Basin I* (B. Odabaşı and E. Üçbaylar, 1987).

35 Erim 1985, 180; see Nbk 253: *S Agora Gate I-84, Book 1* (B. Rose, 1984); Nbk 254: *S Agora Gate I-84, Book 2, also containing I-85* (B. Rose and A. Önce, 1984); Nbk 271: *Portico of Tiberius S I; S II* (A. Önce, 1985).

36 Nbk 278: *Portico of Tiberius SE I; SW I* (J. Gorence and K. Erim, 1986); Nbk 279: *Portico of Tiberius SE I, Book 2* (K. Erim and J. Gorence, 1986).

37 Erim 1986a, 180.

38 Erim 1985, 180.

in front of the North Stoa in 1985 confirmed the observations made to the west two years earlier: the stylobate was raised on top of a course of seat blocks above the original ground level of the space, and this area was filled in late antiquity, with new pipes laid across it.[39]

The focus on the peripheries of the 'South Agora' meant that the final feature of the complex to be identified archaeologically was the monumental pool that ran down its centre. A stretch of the southern walls of this structure was discovered in 1984, eighty years after the first excavations in the area, but at this point their significance was not appreciated. In her notebook on the excavations of her Trench B in the middle of the 'South Agora' in 1984, Juliette de La Genière describes simply the discovery of 'two rows of re-used blocks in an east–west direction', which were interpreted as the remains of a 'road' or pathway across this marshy area.[40] The large number of inscriptions and gameboards on the blocks was noted, as was the similarity of at least one of the reused blocks with the seat blocks from the Theatre.

In 1985, a section of the northern pool walls, near the centre of the pool, was uncovered by Ali Önce during his work on the clearance of the North Stoa (Pl. 5.C).[41] Only in 1988, when work in front of the Propylon, overseen by Francis Thode, discovered the eastern end of the pool, was its full scale appreciated.[42] At this point a substantial section of the northern portion of the east end of the pool walls was explored and the channel between them excavated; the hydraulic arrangements at this end of the structure were also carefully documented. A trench at the western end confirmed the extent and precise configuration of the pool, and Önce's earlier trench was also re-opened and expanded.[43] The discovery of the pool in 1988 was a surprise: as Erim put it, 'at the present state of investigation, this unexpected feature of the Tiberian portico cannot be fully explained.'[44] The fact that the exterior edges of the pool walls were treated as seats, like the blocks beneath the stylobates of the stoas, encouraged Erim to question the validity of Jacopi's identification of the area as an agora.

This renewed interest in the function of the 'South Agora' prompted a series of interventions between 1988 and 1990 in the pool itself, which exposed the eastern and western ends of the structure for distances of *c.* 18 m and *c.* 50 m respectively (see Fig. 4).[45] At the east end a late ramp of stone blocks was located in 1989 (a probable 'cattle ramp'; see Ch. 8 §A; Pl. 80.D).[46] Also from the east end of the pool came a well-preserved carved wooden panel decorated with a meander pattern, probably part of the architecture of the North Stoa (see Pl. 12.B).[47] In 1990, three trenches were opened by Nathalie de Chaisemartin and Dinu Theodorescu within the North Stoa, with the specific aim of testing the theory that this structure could have been part of a gymnasium.[48] In the first of these (1990-S1), the excavators identified what they argued was a sunken floor running along the centre of the stoa, which had a surface of marble chips set in a light mortar; on either side of this they recognized raised walkways, into which terracotta pipes were cut in late antiquity, with the southernmost of these walkways partially supported by a row of rough blocks below the level of the stylobate. A second sondage (1990-S2) further east identified some of the same features, though again it was noted that the interior of the North Stoa was heavily modified in late antiquity.[49] A third trench cleared the central doorway between the 'South Agora' and the Agora proper, where the row of marble seats had previously been found re-used as part of the back wall of the North Stoa.[50]

In 1991, the same excavators, with Anca Lemaire, opened a further five trenches to investigate the relationship between the components of the complex and the date of them.[51] The first of these trenches (1991-S1) targeted the north-east corner and showed that the North Stoa originally turned here, probably for two intercolumniations or *c.* 4.5 m, before the Propylon was built.[52] This was confirmed by a trench inside the basin in front of the Propylon (1991-S4), which found no trace of an earlier stoa.[53] A third trench (1991-S2) explored the join between the South Stoa and the Propylon. This confirmed the late date of most of what remains of the South Stoa but also identified the sub-structures of an earlier stoa, which does not seem to have turned to the north beneath the later Propylon.[54] At the north-west corner of the complex, a further trench (1991-S5) was opened inside the West Stoa, just to the west of the 1988 sondage excavated by Önce, which confirmed that the seat blocks and *euthynteria* of the North Stoa originally continued further to the west.[55] Finally, a trench (1991-S3) was opened against the exterior of the northern wall of the pool itself, which first iden-

39 See Nbk 257: *N Portico of Tiberius, Book 2* (T. Çıkış, 1984), 10 for a plan of these pipes; Nbk 259: *Portico of Tiberius: North-Central East* (K. Erim, 1984), 4–5.

40 Nbk 252: *S Agora/Temple of Aphrodite/Acropolis (Höyük)* (J. de La Genière, 1984), 6–10.

41 Nbk 269: *Portico of Tiberius NE II, Book 2* (A. Önce, 1985), 17–18, 23.

42 Nbk 298: *Agora Gate: Basin Front II* (F. Thode, 1988), 14–16.

43 Nbk 293: *Portico of Tiberius W I* (A. Tulga et al., 1988); Nbk 300: *Portico of Tiberius NCE I* (A. Önce, 1988).

44 Erim (1990, 20) correctly noted the exceptional size of the structure and drew comparisons with the pools in the Library of Hadrian at Athens, the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, and the Canopus of Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli (see Ch. 2 §D).

45 , 13. For 1988: Nbk 299: *Agora Gate: Basin II* (E. Üçbaylar et al., 1988). For 1989: Nbk 304: *Portico of Tiberius W I* (A. Page and F. Thode, 1989); Nbk 305: *Portico of Tiberius W II* (A. Page and F. Thode, 1989); Nbk 306: *W Portico of Tiberius; SW Pool* (K. Görkay, 1989); Nbk 307: *SW Portico of Tiberius* (F. Thode, 1989); Nbk 308: *Portico of Tiberius SI & II* (A. Page, 1989); Nbk 309: *Portico of Tiberius SIII* (A. Page, 1989); Nbk 310: *E Portico of Tiberius: Basin 89-I* (A. Önce, 1989). For 1990: Nbk 316: *Portico of Tiberius: W Pool, Book I; E Pool* (A.T. Tek, 1990); Nbk 317: *Portico of Tiberius: W Pool, Book II* (A.T. Tek, 1990); Nbk 318: *Portico of Tiberius: E Pool* (A. Önce, 1990).

46 Nbk 310: *E Portico of Tiberius: Basin 89-I* (A. Önce, 1989), 24.

47 Smith 1996, 1920, fig. 11.

48 For all trenches, see Nbk 319: *Portico of Tiberius: Sondage 1; Sondage 2; NCE Porte Centrale* (N. de Chaisemartin and D. Theodorescu, 1990); see also, de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 150 fig. 1, 167–171.

49 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 167, fig. 18.

50 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 171, fig. 20; de Chaisemartin 1989a, 73.

51 For all trenches, see Nbk 323: *Portico of Tiberius Sondages* (D. Theodorescu et al., 1991).

52 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 152–3 fig. 3.

53 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 158, fig. 9.

54 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 157–8 fig. 8.

55 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 153–4 fig. 6.

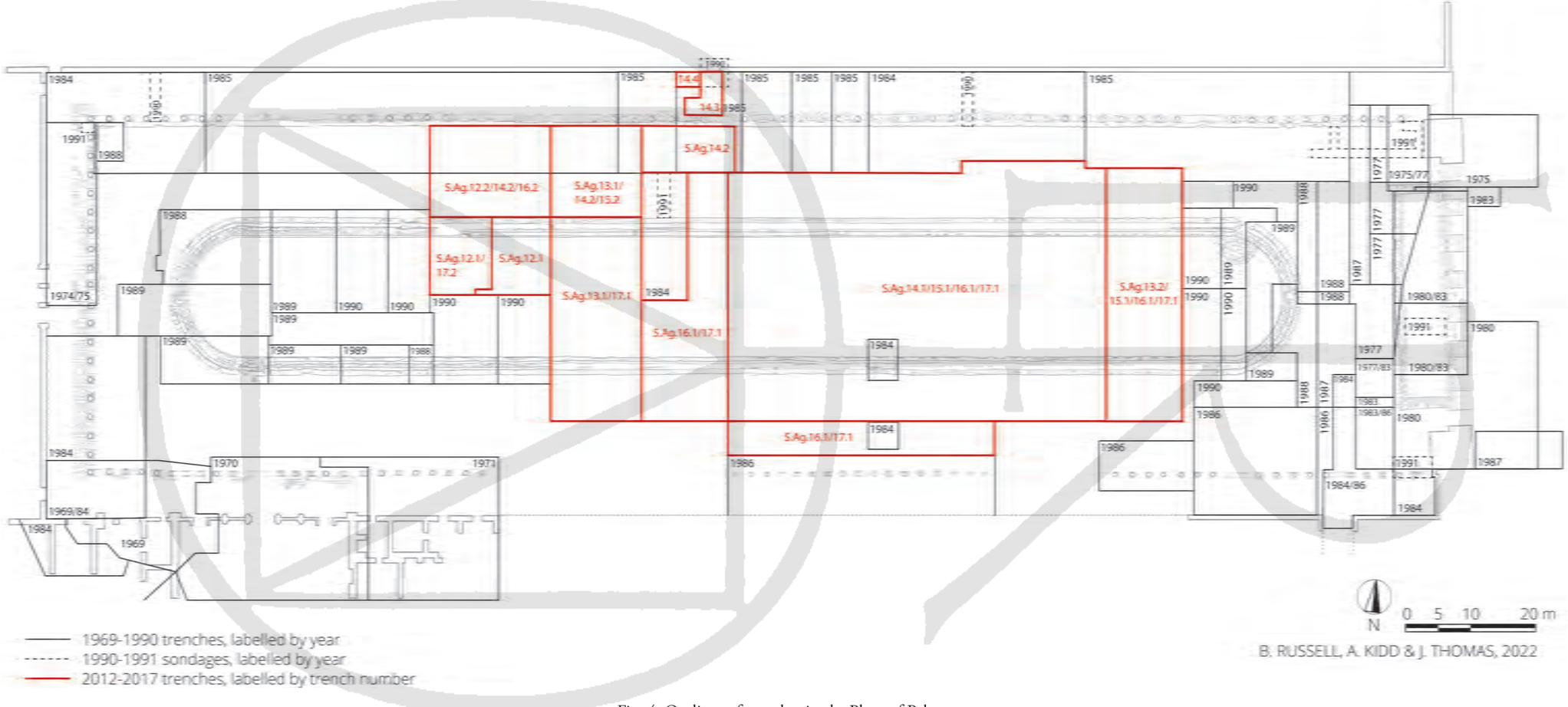

Fig. 4. Outlines of trenches in the Place of Palms.

tified the fact that the pool walls were raised in late antiquity in a second phase of building.[56] This information has proved vital for reconstructing the development of the area over time.

D. THE FUNCTION OF THE 'SOUTH AGORA'

In the wake of the discovery of the pool and the excavations between 1988 and 1991, the possibility that the 'South Agora' could in fact have been built as a gymnasium, an idea proposed by Ferri and explored but dismissed by Crema in 1939, began to gain traction again. In 1989, de Chaisemartin, who had worked on the mask-and-garland frieze of the 'South Agora' since 1979, published a key article arguing once more for the identification of the entire complex as a gymnasium, based primarily on its plan and the iconography of its architectural ornamentation.[57] This was followed up in 1996 by a fuller discussion of this proposal.[58] The key additional pieces of evidence that de Chaisemartin and Lemaire marshalled in support of their argument were: first, the dimensions of the space (which they compared to hellenistic gymnasia elsewhere)[59] and its connection with the Hadrianic Baths and their putative predecessor; second, the archaeological evidence that they identified within the North Stoa in 1990 and interpreted as a sunken exercise track; and third, the inscription mentioning a Gymnasium of Diogenes that Ferri had first connected to this space.[60]

The first of these bodies of evidence had already been partially dismissed by Crema, while Christopher Ratté has shown that the overall dimensions of the complex were largely determined by those of the earlier Agora; so while it is true that the space was large enough to have been used for certain athletic events, it remains unlikely that the complex was built with these in mind.[61] There is also as yet no evidence that another set of baths existed on the site of the later Hadrianic Baths.[62]

The archaeological evidence from within the North Stoa is more complicated. Using the data from the 1990 excavations, de Chaisemartin and Lemaire argued that this structure was built as a covered exercise area or *xystos*, a portico type that Vitruvius tells us was commonly associated with gymnasia and enabled athletics, especially wrestling, to be carried out undercover during winter months.[63] Vitruvius says such a portico should have walkways of at least 10 feet along either side, with a sunken area between them not less than 12 feet wide. If he means that each walkway should be 10 feet wide then this implies a total minimum internal width of 32 Roman feet or *c.* 9.44 m. The features identified by de Chaisemartin and Lemaire are much narrower than this, but they argue that Vitruvius means that the walkways together should have a width of 10 feet, in which case the deposits they document in the North Stoa are of broadly the correct dimensions.[64] This seems however to force an unlikely meaning from the Latin, and since Vitruvius specifies later in his text that the *xystos* is a portico of large dimensions, it is overwhelmingly more likely that he means that each walkway should be 10 feet wide, *c.* 3 m, rather than just 1.5 m.[65] The North Stoa, as Bert Smith noted at the time, with its internal width of 6.59 m, is simply not large enough to accommodate such activities.[66] The other features identified during the excavations can also be explained differently: the layer of marble chips interpreted by de Chaisemartin and Lemaire as an exercise track is more likely a layer of construction debris related to the erection of the building; the rough blocks beneath the back of the stylobate are also simply part of the foundations of the colonnade.[67] Other features of the interior of the North Stoa that are mostly late antique are examined further in Ch. 4 §E.

The third piece of evidence referenced by de Chaisemartin and Lemaire is the inscription, found in the area of the Theatre, mentioning a Gymnasium of Diogenes.[68] Ferri first connected this text to the 'South Agora' because of the mention of a Diogenes. However, this inscription, honouring Marcus Ulpius Carminius Claudianus, dates to the second century AD, as shown by Anne-Valérie Pont,[69] and Angelos Chaniotis has argued that the gymnasium in question was named after a sponsor, Lucius Antonius Claudius Diogenes Dometeinos, who provided funds for the *gymnasiarchos* in eternity in *c.* AD 175.[70] The exact reference in the text is also to the construction of an anointing room (ἀλειπτήριον) in the gymnasium and so probably to part of a bath complex; Chaniotis suggests that the obvious structure to connect this text to is the second-century Theatre Baths.

Two other observations count against the gymnasium proposal. While Erim considered the possibility that the pool could have had 'a practical as well as an aesthetic purpose', further exploration of it suggested it was probably too shallow, at maximum *c.* 0.94 m (see Ch. 2 §B), to be a swimming pool, the *natatio* that de Chaisemartin and Lemaire also refer to;[71] in comparison most *natationes* in Roman bathhouses are between 1 m and 2 m deep, while the swimming pool in the Hasmonean

56 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 158–9, fig. 9.

57 de Chaisemartin 1989b. For a full publication of the mask and garland frieze, and similar friezes elsewhere in the city, see de Chaisemartin forthcoming; in that volume de Chaisemartin has not revised her interpretation in the light of new evidence, and continues to identify the 'South Agora' as a gymnasium.

58 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996.

59 de Chaisemartin 1989a; b; de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 170.

60 For an extended, and more recent, discussion of the gymnasium proposal, see Maiuro 2007, 203–209; Ismaelli 2011, 167; de Chaisemartin forthcoming.

61 Ratté 2002, 16.

62 A later suggestion by Joyce Reynolds (1995) that an inscription found in the Hadrianic Baths relates to a pre-Hadrianic bath building is to be rejected; see Wilson 2016a, 182.

63 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 167–170. On this building type, Vitruvius, *De Arch* V.11.3–4,.

64 de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 170.

65 Vitruvius, *De Arch* VI.7.5; *De Arch* V.11.3 reads: *ita facta, uti in partibus, quae fuerint circa parietes et quae erit ad columnas, margines habeant uti semitas non minus pedum denum mediumque excavatum, uti gradus sint in descensu marginibus sesquipedem ad planitiem, quae planities sit non minus pedes xii*, and the translation F. Granger gives in the Loeb series is 'On the sides which adjoin the walls and those which adjoin the columns, they are to have borders ten feet wide to serve as paths.'

66 Smith 1996, 45.

67 Smith 1996, 45.

68 de Chaisemartin 1989a, 73.

69 Pont 2008.

70 Chaniotis 2008b, 72–3.

71 Erim 1990, 20; de Chaisemartin and Lemaire 1996, 164.

winter palace complex at Jericho was 4 m deep.[72] Instead, as Smith has put it, the pool's 'primary purpose was surely ornamental—it was a grand civic "amenity" providing nothing more practical than an impressive display and cooler air in the summer heat within the complex.'[73]

The key final point about the 'South Agora' that is never truly dealt with by de Chaisemartin and Lemaire is its position within the city plan. This was a public space of high traffic and a vital lynchpin in the urban plan, quite unlike a gymnasium (see Fig. 1; Pl. 2.B, 3.A–B). The Basilica opens on to it; the Propylon is oriented towards its interior; it is directly connected to the Theatre, Hadrianic Baths, the Agora proper, and the Tetrapylon Street. By the second century it had three entrances from the north, two from the east, at least four from the south, and three from the west; in its first phase it appears to have been completely open at its eastern end and across much of its southern side. The construction of the enormous set of stairs up through the Theatre Hill retaining wall, at the point at which the whole area was first laid out, is testament to the envisaged role of this area as one of high connectivity.[74] As Smith has noted, 'a gymnasium was a private space in which youths exercised naked and which could, at least in principle, be closed.'[75] For Ratté the 'South Agora' was, in contrast, essentially a thoroughfare: its location 'in the centre of the city with useful buildings all around it meant that it was actually on the way from one place to another, and so probably more often passed through, than visited in its own right'; he compares it to key street intersections in places like Miletos or Ephesos, which gradually developed into focal points in their respective urban armatures.[76]

If the area was not a gymnasium, was Jacopi correct that it was a second commercial agora? This interpretation is also problematic. *Topos* inscriptions, seemingly identifying the locations of stallholders in the stoas, certainly do attest to commercial activity here in late antiquity,[77] but the complex is unlikely to have been built as a marketplace: the Agora was presumably the city's main commercial space. Instead of an agora the more obvious parallels for the complex are in fact the grand *porticus* of late republican and imperial Rome. Crema first noted this 'Roman' connection in the 1930s and the proposal has been further developed by Smith: this was 'a second public square, a grand piazza, progressively equipped with lavish marble architecture, fine marble decoration, a sumptuous aedicular "gate", and a magnificent pool – none of it for any particular function (rather the reverse, all conspicuously useless), but, like the great *porticus* of Rome, designed for the pleasure and well-ordered leisure of all good citizens with the means and free time to enjoy it.'[78] Ratté draws a parallel with Central Park in New York and highlights the significance of the complex in the urban development of the city. Following the major phase of construction at Aphrodisias in the Augustan period under C. Julius Zoilos, the famous freedman of Octavian, this central urban complex was one of the key structures of a Tiberian building programme that was sponsored by a new range of local elites, who Joyce Reynolds proposed were consciously asserting themselves in the post-Zoilos era.[79] Ratté notes the scale of the undertaking, which required the cutting back the Theatre Hill, and its significance for urban foot traffic, providing a key connection between Theatre and Temple via the Agora for the first time.[80]

E. THE MICA AND AHMET ERTEGÜN SOUTH AGORA POOL PROJECT, 2012–2018

One set of data from the 'South Agora' that was never integrated into these various discussions of its function is the late antique inscriptions on the façade of the Propylon. These texts honour those responsible for the reconstruction of the complex in the late fifth/early sixth century AD. They are discussed in detail below (in Ch. 4 §A and Appendix 1), but a key point from the northernmost of the three inscriptions (In10) is relevant here.[81] This text gives thanks on behalf of the nymphs to a certain Ampelios 'because he gave wonder and splendid beauty to this place of palms, so that anyone who, among our waters, turns his glance around, may always sing the praise both of him, and of the place, and of the Nymphs as well.' Only in 2011 was the implication of this inscription first appreciated: the composer of this text was assuming that whoever who was reading it was standing in the 'Place of Palms', which must therefore be the open area of the so-called 'South Agora'. The 'waters' mentioned are presumably those of the pool, since the basin in front of the Propylon, as will be shown below (see Ch. 4 §A, §N), was added after the inscription.

By late antiquity, then, the so-called 'South Agora' was apparently called the 'Place of Palms'. Whether it had this name from the beginning is impossible to know. However, there certainly was a palm grove in the city earlier, as a first- or second-century inscription attests, and it seems unlikely that the city had two complexes known in this way.[82] This raised the possibility that, exactly like the *porticus* of Rome referenced by Smith, this complex was not just a grand piazza, striking for the scale of its surrounding architecture and its pool in particular, but also a green space, planted with trees and bushes to provide shade—an urban park, not like New York's Central Park in appearance though similar in function.

In 2012, a pair of test trenches was opened to see whether the theory that this was a planted area could be proven (Fig. 4). Two contiguous trenches were opened at the western end of the unexcavated area of the pool (to the west of the middle of the pool), one within it and one covering the area between it and the North Stoa. Inside the pool, these excavations enabled the various phases of filling and silting-up of the structure in the post-Roman period, which had first been documented in the

72 Nielsen 1990, 155; for example, the *natationes* in the Baths of Caracalla, 1.20–1.40 m deep (Yegül 1992, 158), and the Hadrianic Baths at Lepcis Magna, 1.73 m deep (Bartoccini 1929, 31). Jericho: Netzer 1975, 92.

73 Erim 1990, 20; Smith 1996, 13.

74 On this point, Smith 1996, 45; Ratté 2002, 15; Raja 2012, 38.

75 Smith 1996, 49.

76 Ratté 2002, 24.

77 Roueché 1989, 237–9 (nos 199–206); see also Ch. 5 §D.

78 Smith 1996, 49.

79 Ratté 2002, 16; Reynolds 1987.

80 Ratté 2002, 16; also Raja 2012, 38, 51.

81 *IAph2007* 4.202.i.

82 *MAMA* VIII.448 = *IAph2007* 12.204.