

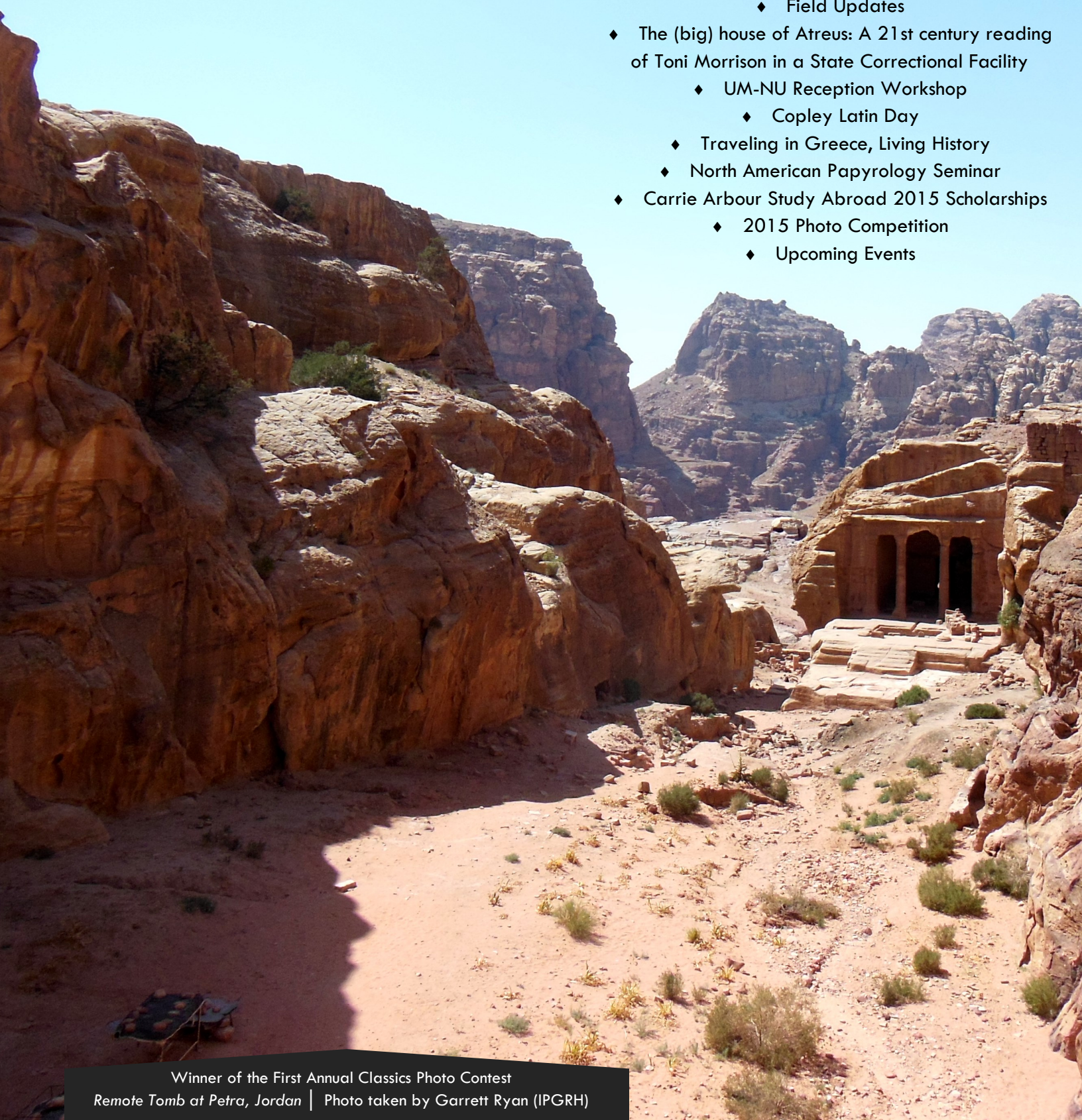
# CLASSICS CONVIVIUM

2015 · VOLUME XVII

**M** | LSA CLASSICAL STUDIES  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## INCLUDED IN NEWSLETTER

- ◆ Field Updates
- ◆ The (big) house of Atreus: A 21st century reading of Toni Morrison in a State Correctional Facility
  - ◆ UM-NU Reception Workshop
    - ◆ Copley Latin Day
    - ◆ Traveling in Greece, Living History
    - ◆ North American Papyrology Seminar
- ◆ Carrie Arbour Study Abroad 2015 Scholarships
  - ◆ 2015 Photo Competition
  - ◆ Upcoming Events



Winner of the First Annual Classics Photo Contest

Remote Tomb at Petra, Jordan | Photo taken by Garrett Ryan (IPGRH)

## NOTION · CHRIS RATTÉ

The relationship between archaeological and textual evidence has been a preoccupation of Classical archaeologists ever since Schliemann began excavations at Troy 145 years ago. When my colleague Felipe Rojas (Brown University) and I began an archaeological survey project at Notion on the Aegean coast of Turkey last year, one of the first things we did was to collect as much information as we could about the city from historical and documentary sources. These sources are silent on some questions of great interest to us – such as whether or not the site was occupied in the Bronze Age, or what happened to the city in late antiquity – but they provide very useful information on other subjects, including the early history of Notion in the late sixth and fifth centuries B.C., its status during the Peloponnesian war, and its relations with the neighboring sites of Claros and Colophon. On the latter note, the sources seem to indicate that Notion was originally subordinate to Colophon, but that this situation was reversed in the course of the Hellenistic period. In the Roman era, Notion was closely associated with the popular pagan pilgrimage site of Claros (an oracular sanctuary of Apollo), and it was later the seat of a Christian bishop. We assumed that Notion, like nearby Ephesus, remained a prosperous city until the large-scale abandonment of towns in this region in the early seventh century A.D.

Even before we began fieldwork in 2014, it was clear that “archaeological Notion” differed in some important respects from “textual Notion,” most significantly in the absence of any evidence for occupation of the site before the fourth or third century – but this is not all that difficult to explain. It is possible that the earlier phases of the city lie buried beneath later architecture. Alternatively, Notion

may have originally been located somewhere else. There are many examples of ancient cities that moved from one location to another in periods of growth. Nearby cases include Priene and Magnesia-on-the-Maeander, and Notion as preserved – a fortified settlement about 75 acres in area – resembles both of these in being a very obviously (grid-) planned town.

Field research in 2014 was limited to mapping and architectural documentation. We continued this work in 2015 and also started a number of new projects, including a program supervised by IPCAA graduate Angela Commito to collect surface finds, consisting mainly of fragments of pottery and roof tiles. The results were quite a surprise. The earliest pottery dates to ca. 200 B.C. – somewhat but not significantly later than expected. The real surprise is that the latest pottery dates to the first century A.D. In this respect (always assuming that further analysis corroborates these preliminary results), “archaeological Notion” is quite different from “textual Notion” – or, to be precise, from “textual Notion” as we previously understood it. It may be that the grand urban experiment represented by the visible remains was ultimately unsuccessful, and that the large grid-planned town that initially attracted our attention was largely abandoned only a few generations after it was created. Notion clearly continued to exist until the Middle Ages, but perhaps on a much smaller scale than we had imagined (and possibly at a different location, nearer to the sanctuary at Claros).

The history of the ancient Greek and Roman city is full of foundation stories – but it would not be surprising if many of those efforts ended in failure. The results of this year’s work suggest that Notion may have been one such case.

