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NOTION ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY, 2014-2015

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Notion is a largely unexplored ancient city on the west coast of Turkey, 15 km northwest of Ephesus (Map 1). Situated on two promontories jutting into the Aegean Sea, its isolated location has ensured that the site is only lightly buried, making it an ideal candidate for archaeological survey. We know from textual sources that Notion had a long life, extending from at least ca. 500 BC until the late Roman period. Of particular interest is its relationship with two neighboring locations: the sanctuary of Apollo at Claros, 1.5 km to the north, and the city of Colophon, 15 km to the northwest. Together, these three sites and the enclosing valley form a classic Mediterranean microenvironment, with Notion providing crucial access to the sea.

In many ways Notion thus encapsulates the long-term history of the Mediterranean city, but two seasons of archaeological survey suggest that its particular history was more complicated than at first appears. Most interesting is evidence indicating that the site identified as Notion was intensively occupied for only a few centuries, between the 3rd century BC and the 1st century AD. Was Notion originally situated elsewhere? If so, why was it relocated to this site? Why was the new city apparently so short lived? And what happened to the population afterward? We will return to these questions at the end of this report.

Notion lies on the east side of the mouth of the Hales River, near the modern village of Ahmetbeyli (Photo: 1). Its two promontories are joined by a narrow ridge, and the more or less level area on top, approximately 35 ha, is enclosed by 3.5 km long fortifications (Map: 2). The walls are preserved to heights

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of over 4 m in some sections, and almost the entire circuit is visible, including numerous gates and towers. Within the fortifications, the layout of the city is remarkably clear. The bedrock is exposed in many places, including two large artificially leveled terraces, and the foundations of literally hundreds of walls are visible. The locations of numerous streets are immediately apparent, showing that the city is a grid-planned town, organized around a large central square, presumably the Agora. Other monuments recorded by the earliest visitors to the site and still visible today include two small temples on the western edge of the city, the Bouleuterion on the eastern edge of the Agora, the Theater farther to the east, and a second large square on the eastern side of the city.

The identification of the site rests on its location. Among other considerations, all the literary sources agree that Notion was the port of Colophon, and the Hales River valley provides the closest and most direct connection between Colophon and the sea. Indeed the name Notion – τὸ Νότιον, “the southern place,” as in English Southbury or Southwick – seems to refer to its location with respect to Colophon. The earliest literary references to Notion date to the late 6th and 5th centuries BC. According to Hecataeus (*FrGrHist* 1A, 1, F fr. 233), Notion was a city of Ionia, while Herodotus considers it one of the cities of Aeolis (1.149.3). Thucydides (3.34) describes Notion as “a city of the Colophonians,” and Aristotle (*Pol.* 1303b) cites the combination of Notion and Colophon as an example of a city united politically but subdivided geographically, and therefore susceptible to civil unrest. During the Peloponnesian war, an important sea battle fought off the coast of Notion in 406 led to the downfall of the Athenian general Alcibiades (*Xen. Hell.* 1.5.11-14; *Diod.* 13.71).

Inscriptions show that in the late 4th century BC, Notion and Colophon formed a sympolity, after which the twin cities shared laws and a calendar.⁴ According to Pausanias (1.9.7; 7.3.4), when the early Hellenistic warlord Lysimachus captured Colophon in 294 BC, part of the city’s population was resettled at nearby Ephesus, and Notion may also have been implicated in this resettlement. At this time

⁴ R. Etienne and L. Migeotte, “Colophon et les abus des fermiers des taxes,” *BCH* 122 (1998) 143-157, with references.

the port city was apparently renamed Colophon-by-the-sea, and the inland city, now known as Old Colophon, lost its importance and prestige. Historical sources for the Roman period are meager, but we know that a bishop of Colophon – possibly New Colophon or Notion – took part in the First Council of Ephesus in 431.⁵

The history of Notion thus touches on numerous subjects of contemporary interest, including the formation of new cultural identities associated with the so-called Ionian and Aeolic migrations, the effects of the Persian conquest and the Peloponnesian wars on the cities of western Anatolia, the consolidation of local communities in the Hellenistic period through institutions such as synoikism and sympolity, and Romanization and the advent of Christianity. Earlier archaeological research has been very limited. The site was identified by the German archaeologist Carl Schuchhardt in 1886, and small-scale excavations were carried out by a French team in 1922-23 and by Turkish teams in 1985-86 and again in 1994.⁶

A new archaeological survey of Notion was started by the University of Michigan and Brown University in 2014. Two seasons of a 4-year program of investigation have now been carried out: a 2-week preliminary reconnaissance by a team of 10 persons in 2014, and a month-long program of research by a team of 13 persons in 2015. Work to date has focused largely on the area within the city walls and has involved the following components: photogrammetric mapping and geophysical prospection; documentation and study of specific aspects of the architecture and infrastructure of the city, including the city plan, Agora, civic and sacred buildings, fortifications, and water supply; collection of surface finds; geological investigations; and site conservation and management.

Mapping and Geophysical Prospection. As already noted, Notion's remarkable surface legibility makes it an ideal candidate for archaeological survey.

⁵ See R. Price and M. Gaddis, eds., *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon. Translated Texts for Historians* 45, Vol. 1 (Liverpool 2007) 298, 336; Colophon was also represented by the bishop of Pitane at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, *Eid.*, Vol. 2, 232.

⁶ C. Schuchhardt, "Kolophon, Notion und Klaros," *AthMitt* 11 (1886) 398-434. R. Demangel and A. Laumonier "Fouilles de Notion (1921)," *BCH* 47 (1923) 353-386; *Eid.*, "Fouilles de Notion (1921), deuxième partie," *BCH* 49 (1925) 322-346. E. Atalay, "1985 Yılı Notion Kazıları," *VIII. Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, Vol. 2 (Ankara 1986) 249-264; *Ibid.*, "1986 Notion Kazıları," *IX. Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, Vol. 1 (Ankara 1987) 147-169. M. Büyükkolancı, "1994 Yılı Notion Kazıları," *VI. Müze Kurtarma Kazıları Semineri* (Ankara 1996) 371-381.

We began the examination of the urban area by making a detailed topographic map and site plan, using a combination of methods including aerial photogrammetry and geophysical prospection. The former was carried out in 2015 with the aid of unmanned aerial vehicles (lightweight eBee drones); the imagery taken by these drones was used to produce high-resolution models and orthorectified photographs of the entire site (using Terra3D software by Pix4D; Photo 2).⁷ A geomagnetic survey was begun in 2014 and is still underway (using a Bartington Grad 601-2 fluxgate gradiometer; Map: 3). These methods produce partly overlapping, partly complementary data. Most obviously, geophysical prospection has given us a much better record than aerial surveying of structures obscured by tree cover, such as the shops of the north stoa of the Agora, as well as of subterranean features. Close study of the aerial imagery and geophysical data helps us identify features which we then examine on the ground and record in a GIS and database (identifying specific architectural blocks, for example, or specifying whether wall joints are bonded or unbonded). Using these methods, we are making a detailed feature-by-feature map of the site, which will provide an unusually complete record of an ancient city plan (Map: 2).

Architectural Documentation. The geophysical survey, study of aerial imagery, and examination of visible remains have clarified essential aspects of the city plan. On the west side of the city, the distance between the centerlines of east-west streets ranges from 64.0 to 64.8 m. North-south streets are more closely spaced, at 33.35 m between centerlines. The proportions of the blocks are thus close to 1:2, or 110 X 220 Ionic feet (0.295 m). The grid on the east side of the city seems to be slightly different, with blocks closer to 1:1 in proportions. In both areas, the closest parallels are provided by late Classical and Hellenistic cities such as Priene and Heracleia under Latmos.⁸ We have not yet begun thorough study of the houses that occupied these blocks, but it is worth noting that we have documented 47 in-situ threshold blocks, which record the original ground levels wherever they are found, and provide good entry points, literally and figuratively, to the study of the domestic architecture of the site (Photo: 3). Further investigation of domestic areas may help

⁷ The work was undertaken by A. Gribovskiy and C. Serrano of Drone Adventures.

⁸ F. Rumscheid, *Priene: A Guide to the "Pompeii of Asia Minor"* (Istanbul 1999) 26-35; A. Peschlow-Bindokat, *Herakleia am Latmos* (Istanbul 2005) 109-21.

us to understand the later history of the site – if we detect evidence for multiple building phases, for example – as well as its larger cultural milieu – for example, similarities with or differences from the houses of Priene. One important point of interest is the almost total lack of mortared rubble or brick construction.

Embedded in the city grid, the Agora is an oblong area enclosed by porticos on all four sides (Photo 4). On the south is a split-level double colonnaded stoa. The upper level apparently opens onto the Agora, the lower level onto an east-west street running south of the Agora at an elevation ca. 2.5 m below the Agora level. Behind the east stoa at the northeast corner of the Agora lies the Bouleuterion, a rectangular structure opening on to the east (see below). The exterior dimensions of the Agora are 130 X 97 m, similar to the size of the Agora at Heracleia, which is 135 X 90 m in area, much larger than the Agora at Priene, at 92 X 95 m. Its proportions are 3:4, or 330 X 440 Ionic feet.⁹

In addition to the general study of the city plan and Agora, we have begun more detailed architectural study of the monumental buildings beginning with 1) the small temple identified by previous excavators as a Heroon but possibly a Temple of Apollo¹⁰ (Drawing 1) and the Bouleuterion. The latter is of particular interest. Its rectangular outline and seating arrangement are typical of the Classical and Hellenistic periods, and it is larger in plan (24.2 X 30.5 m) than any other comparable building – considerably larger than the Bouleuteria of Priene (20 X 21 m) and Heracleia (20 X 26 m), and larger also than both the Old and the New Bouleuteria at Athens (23 m square and 16 X 22 m, respectively).¹¹

Fortifications. The fortifications of Notion are the city’s best-preserved monument, conspicuous both by land and by sea. The walls were surveyed in detail with an RTK-GNSS in 2015, and graphic and photographic documentation is underway. They are built largely out of white and blue-grey marble, with some use

⁹ Dimensions for the agorai of Priene and Heracleia taken from R. Martin, *Recherches sur l’Agora grecque* (Paris 1951) Table 1.

¹⁰ As suggested by E. Laflı, and A. Cumalıođlu, “The Agoras of Notion in Ionia,” in A. Giannikouri, ed., *The Agora in the Mediterranean from Homeric to Roman Times* (Athens 2011) 271-277.

¹¹ D. Gneisz, *Das antike Rathaus: das griechische Bouleuterion und die frührömische Curia* (Wien 1990) 309-12 (Athens), 322 (Heracleia), 346-47 (Priene).

of a distinctive reddish conglomerate (Photo 5). The masonry is isodomic, in some places trapezoidal isodomic, except in cases of repair. The walls are 2.5 m thick and stood over 4 m high. A total of 16 certain and 29 possible towers have been recorded. Three gates are apparent on the north (landward) side of the walls, as well as three possible gates on the west, one definite and one possible gate on the south, and one definite and one possible gate on the east. The most distinctive feature of the trace of the wall is the salient at the northwest corner, which was probably connected with a gate opening onto the harbor at the mouth of the Hales. In general, the walls are similar to other fortifications of the late Classical and Hellenistic periods, such as the walls of Priene, Colophon, Heracleia under Latmos, and Ephesus.¹²

Architectural details of the walls may illuminate not only concerns with defense at the time they were built but also the more general social and historical circumstances of their construction. In the north and best-preserved section, for example, the walls exhibit different kinds of stone and different construction techniques, possibly because they were built in episodes over a long period of time, or by contractors responsible for different parts of the wall. In either case, their piecemeal construction might suggest that they were financed and constructed at local initiative, rather than by Lysimachus or a comparable figure, but continued detailed documentation and analysis will be necessary to test this hypothesis.

The walls also exhibit evidence for the later history of the city, especially on the south and west sides, which have been extensively repaired. Two different kinds of repairs are attested: one exhibiting large spolia set in hard white mortar, the other smaller scale dry laid limestone blocks (Photo 6). There is no internal or external date for these repairs – similar repairs in other wall circuits are often associated with the late Roman period, but there is no reason why these could not be earlier. The west side of the wall occupies the steepest and most precarious slope, so might have started to fail and require repair relatively soon after it was built.

¹² A.W. McNicoll, *Hellenistic Fortifications from the Aegean to the Euphrates* (Oxford 1997) 48-53 (Priene), 67-70 (Colophon), 75-81 (Heracleia), and 94-101 (Ephesus).

Water Supply. By the conclusion of the 2015 field season, a total of 14 cisterns had been identified on the site. Eight of these have been measured, drawn, and photographed, and laser scans were made of two cisterns, producing detailed three-dimensional models (Photo 7 and Drawing 2). All the cisterns were cut into the native rock, in some places schist, in others marble, in still others, especially in the area of the “Heroon” or Temple of Apollo, banded schist and marble. The cisterns are flask or bottle-shaped, with narrow openings, widening out as they descend. In several cases, the upper parts of the shafts are built out of rubble masonry, supporting schist or limestone cover slabs, or in one case a stone vault (Photo 7 and Drawing 2). As preserved, the cisterns range in capacity from about 4.5 to over 50 cubic meters, but since all the known cisterns are partially filled with earth and debris, they may originally have been much larger. Most of the cisterns are located on the east-west ridge that runs through the center of the site, but it is possible that they were much more numerous in the residential areas on the north and south slopes, where they have been buried by erosion. Given the multiplicity of methods for water supply at comparable Hellenistic towns such as Priene,¹³ it is likely that at Notion, too, additional and higher-quality water was brought into town via at least one aqueduct from a source farther inland.

Collection of Surface Finds. Systematic collection of surface finds was begun in 2015. Significant quantities of diagnostic pottery were recovered, of which the vast majority date to between the 3rd century BC and the 1st century AD, including a generous representative sample of the typical late Hellenistic and early Roman fine table wares commonly found in Asia Minor, such as Hellenistic mold-made bowls, Eastern Sigillata A, early Eastern Sigillata B, Western Sigillata, and Roman lead glaze ware (Photo 8), as well as of common transport amphorae, such as those from Rhodes and Kos. Remarkable is the almost total absence of recognizable later Roman fine wares such as African Red Slip ware, or of late Roman amphora types.

¹³ H. Fahlbusch, “Wasserwirtschaftliche Anlagen des antiken Priene,” in *Wasserhistorische Forschungen. Schwerpunkt Antike* (Siegburg 2003) 55-80; D. Crouch, “Priene’s streets and water supply,” in N. de Haan and G.C.M. Jansen, eds., *Cura Aquarum in Campania* (Leiden 1996) 137-143.

Geological Investigations. The bedrock of Notion consists of marble, schist, and conglomerate rock. All three stones are used in the architecture of the site and were presumably, at least to a significant extent, quarried locally. A number of large quarry cuttings are visible, especially on the east and west promontories (Photo 9). In addition, as noted above, the civic and sacred areas on the crown of the ridge that runs through the center of the city rest on broad, level terraces hewn out of the native rock – they were thus in effect large open-area quarries. One puzzle is the source of the conglomerate rock used for building at Notion (in the construction of seats of the Bouleuterion and Theater, and in the foundations of the temples). The local outcroppings are not very extensive, and it is possible that this stone was transported from other sources to the north or east; alternatively, local sources may have been completely exhausted.

Site Conservation and Management. Notion is a well-preserved archaeological site, situated just 20 minutes' drive from Ephesus, one of Turkey's premier tourist destinations. Unfortunately, Notion is also subject to occasional illicit excavation, and the coast both east and west of the site is frequented by smugglers. The first objective of a site management plan is to secure the preservation of the site, but we also hope it will be possible to pave the way for responsible development of its cultural and ecological potential, in connection with the attractive harbors on both sides of the ancient city, and neighboring archaeological resources such as nearby Claros. Work has begun on a site management plan, which will be developed by an architectural firm specializing in historic preservation in close consultation with the local community and with local authorities including the Izmir Museum (Map 4). To these ends, the site management plan will take the following concerns into consideration: security, conservation, accessibility, signage and tourist paths, landscaping, and feasibility studies for the restoration of the Bouleuterion and other major monuments.

Conclusion. Although Notion existed as a city at least as early as the time of Hecataeus in the later 6th and early fifth 5th century BC, the earliest evidence for occupation of the substantial planned town overlooking the mouth of the Hales River dates to the late Classical or Hellenistic period, that is, the 4th to 1st centuries
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BC. It has long been clear that the major visible monuments of the city belong to this era, and the collection and study of surface finds has provided much better chronological resolution. A notable result is the paucity of pottery and other small finds datable to before the 3rd century BC – but on reflection, that is not terribly surprising. We would not have expected the earliest pottery from the site to be present on the surface in the same quantities as later pottery, and in any case the development of the city plan was clearly the result of a radical expansion or relocation of the original settlement. It is possible that habitation was much more restricted before this period, or indeed that the original settlement was situated elsewhere, such as closer to the harbor and the Hales River, in which case it is now likely buried beneath river-borne silt. In this respect, Notion seems to resemble Priene not only in its fortifications and city plan, but also, not surprisingly, in the attendant historical circumstances.

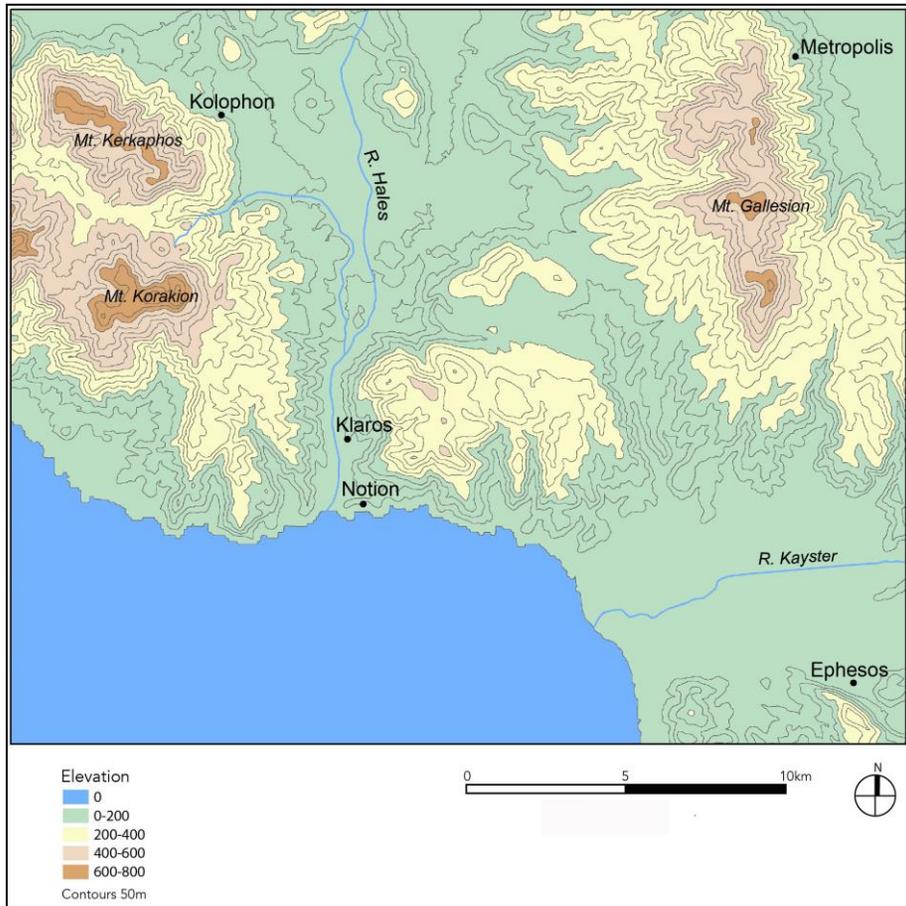
In the case of Notion, the development of the area on top of the promontories next to the harbor and the establishment of a new city plan may or may not be related to one of the epigraphically attested events in the history of the surrounding region, such as the resettlement attributed to the Macedonian general Lysimachus of portions of the population of Colophon at Ephesus in 294 BC. Whatever the precise circumstances of the “re-founding” of the city, many other communities of western Asia Minor shared similar experiences in this period, as local populations and foreign warlords engaged in complicated and shifting maneuvers in pursuit of their sometimes conflicting, sometimes mutual interests. One of the objectives of our project is to examine how archaeology can help us to understand the circumstances of this particular example: to distinguish, for example, between top-down and bottom-up initiatives in the construction of features such as the city wall.

A more surprising result of preliminary research is the almost total absence of pottery later than the 1st century AD, although this is as noted consistent with many aspects of the architecture of the site, including the rarity of mortared rubble construction. This narrow window of occupation is remarkable, since the re-founding of the city was an enormously ambitious undertaking. Our first two

seasons of research have already illuminated the radical transformation of the local landscape required for the creation of a new city, the measures taken to provide water to a site with no natural springs, and the mobilization of labor required for massive infrastructure projects such as the construction of the fortification walls and the terracing of residential districts. Despite these investments by a people whose sense of the life-span of cities certainly extended over many centuries, the new site may have been largely abandoned within ca. 300 years. Here again, Notion is not unlike Priene, which was also largest and most prosperous in the Hellenistic period; much of the western side of that city was destroyed by earthquake, landslide, and fire in the late 2nd century BC and never reoccupied.¹⁴

The eclipse of Notion was probably less dramatic and more gradual. Perhaps fewer of the inhabitants of Colophon and other nearby communities than had been expected were willing to relocate to the new town, or resources for the development of the town were inadequate. It is also possible that the project quickly fell victim to changing circumstances, such as the increasing nucleation of the regional population at the nearby metropolis of Ephesus. Ongoing, finer-grained analysis of both architecture and surface finds may help to clarify this picture, showing whether habitation lasted longer in certain areas of the site than in others, as well as distinguishing between different forms of occupation. For even if Notion did not live up to the dreams of the people or authorities responsible for the development of the new city, the community did continue to exist until the late Roman period. Did certain sectors of the town remain inhabited while others were abandoned? What made these areas more attractive than others for long-term occupation, and what do these choices tell us about the relationship between the surviving community and the larger region, including the harbor and the sanctuary at Claros? These are among the questions to be addressed in future field seasons. Close study of cities such as Notion and Priene reminds us that the life cycles and the life spans of ancient cities could vary tremendously. Each city requires its own biography, and a better biography of Notion is the aim of our research.

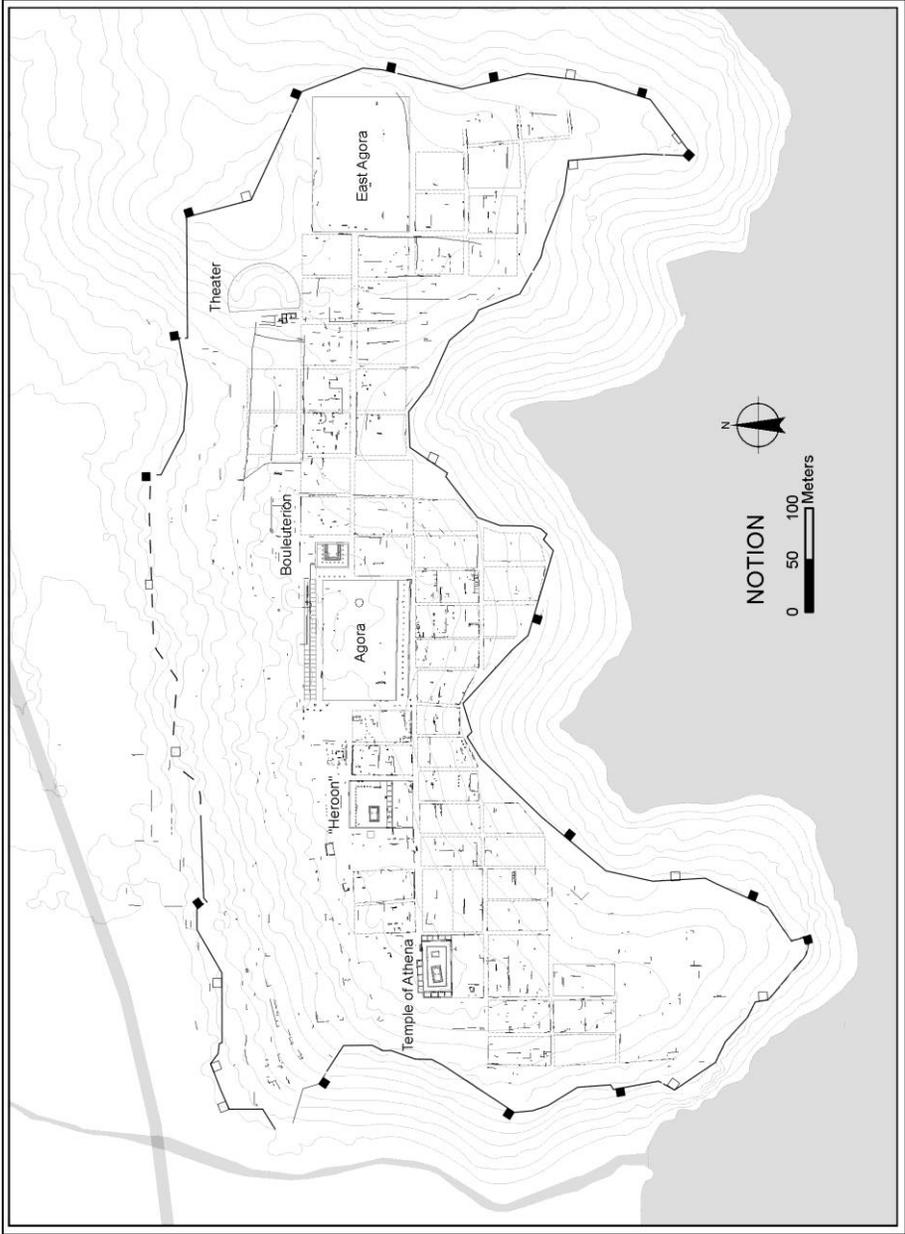
¹⁴ F. Rumscheid, *Priene: A Guide to the "Pompeii of Asia Minor"* (Istanbul 1999) 86, with references.



Map 1: Map of region around Notion



Photo :1 Aerial view of Notion, looking northeast



Map 2: City plan of Notion (revised June 2016)

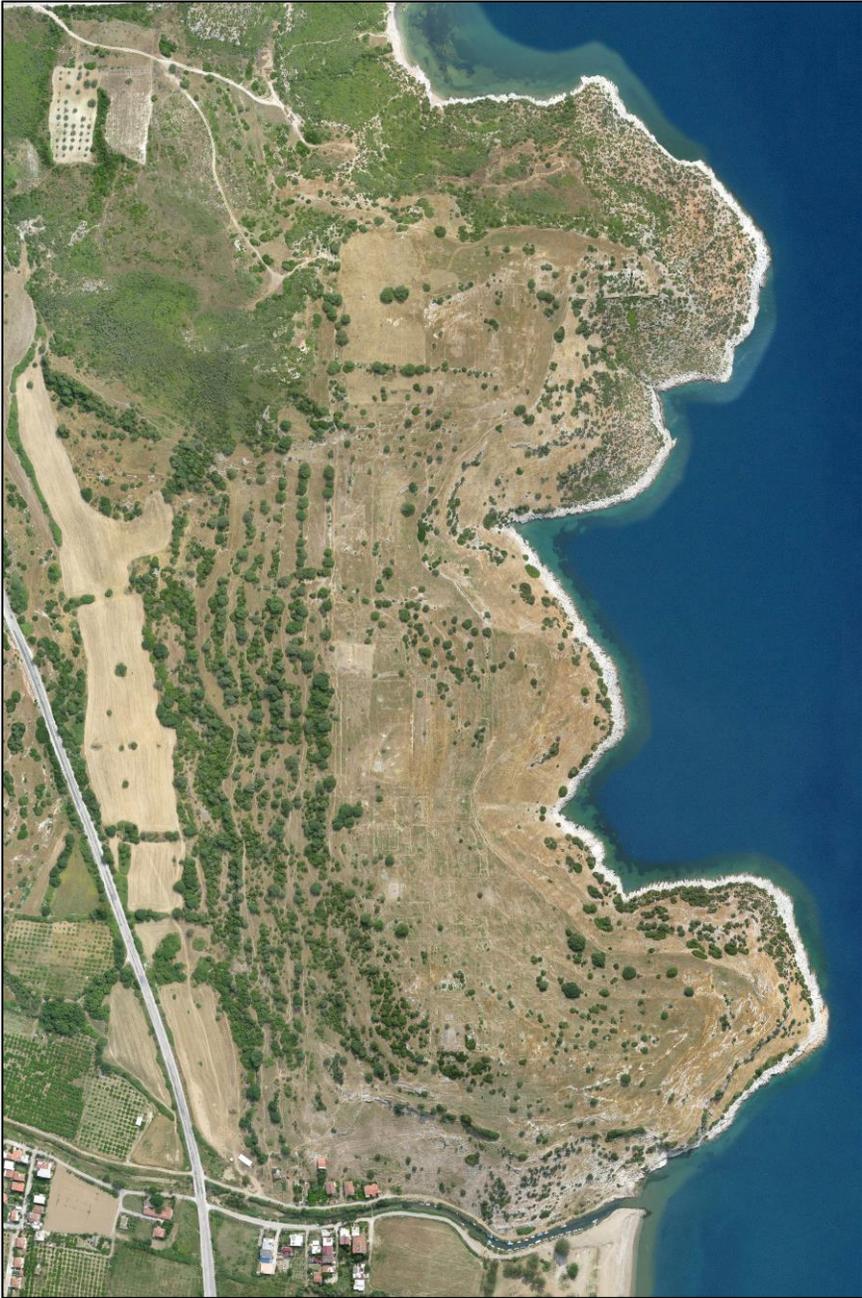


Photo 2 :Orthorectified photomosaic of Notion



Map 3: Plot of results of magnetic survey of center and east side of site



Photo 3 :View of threshold on south side of site, looking southeast

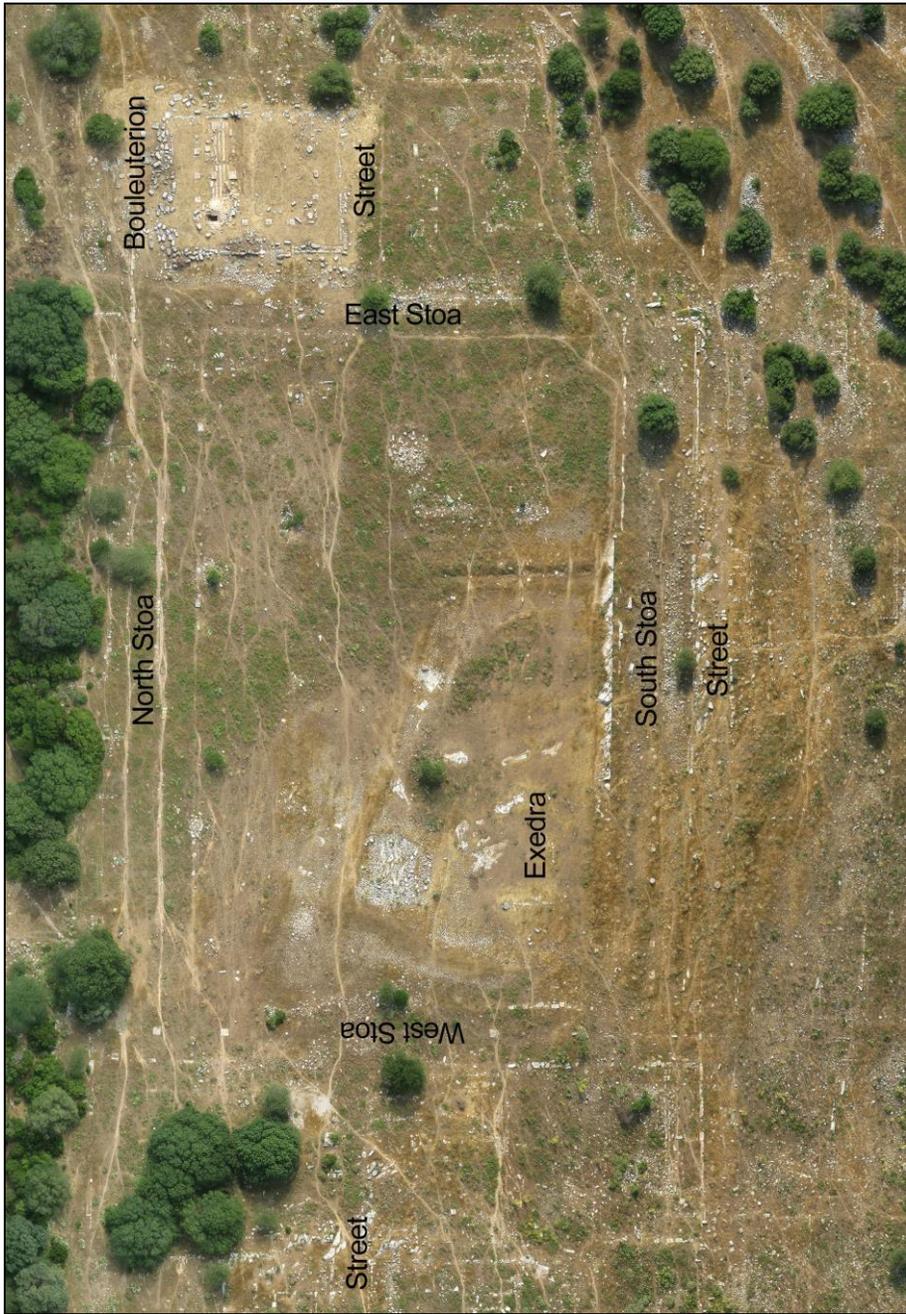
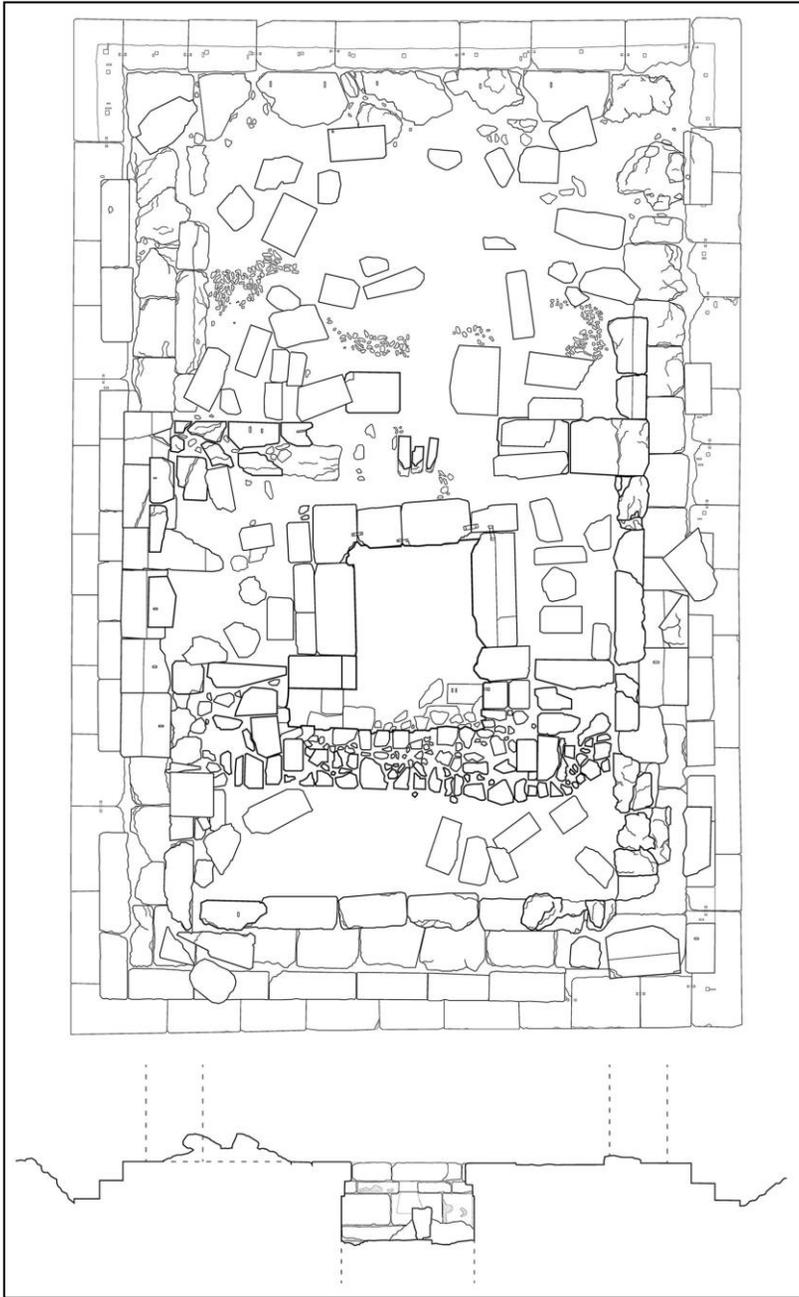


Photo 4 :Orthorectified photomosaic of Agora



Drawing 1 : Plan and N-S section (looking east) of “Heroon” or Temple of Apollo



Photo 5:Detail of east fortification wall, showing isodomic masonry, looking west



Photo 6 :Detail of west fortification wall, showing repair, looking east



Photo 7 :View of cistern



Drawing 2 : Laser scan of cistern

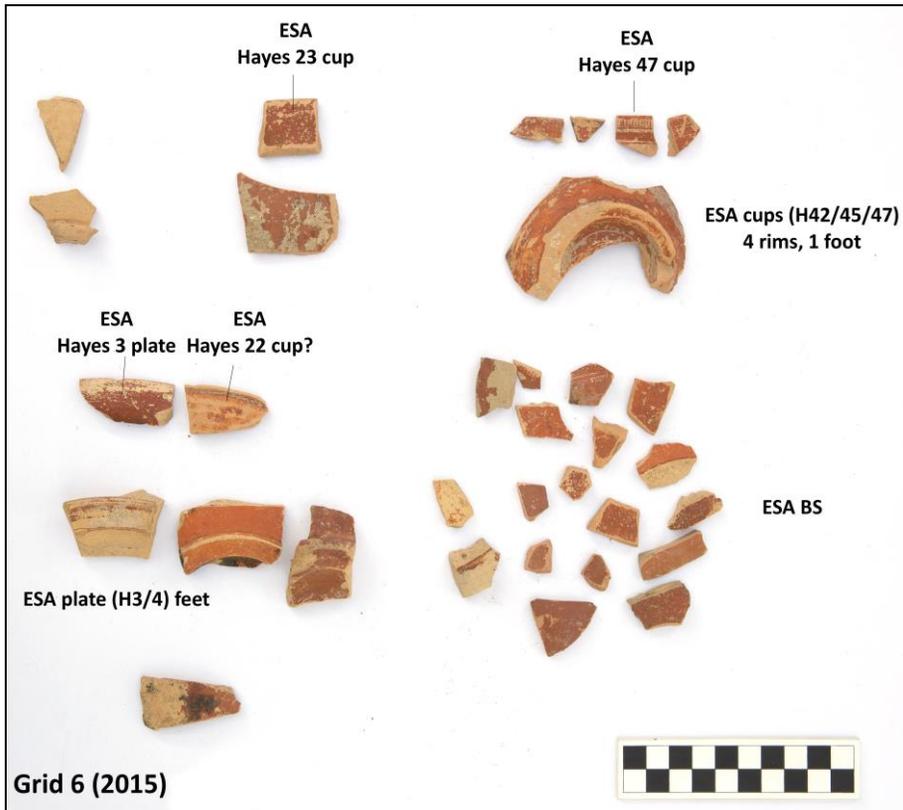


Photo 8 :Eastern Sigillata A plates and cups collected from the area of the Temple of Athena, including examples of the late 2nd century BC to Augustan period (Hayes Form 3; Forms 22 and 23) at left, and the early to mid-1st century AD (Hayes Forms 45 and 47) at top right.



Photo 9 : View of quarry on west promontory, looking north