

NOTION ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY, 2017

A. Introduction

The fourth season of the Notion Archaeological Survey began on 29 May and ended on 3 July 2017. The average size of the staff was 12 persons. The director was Christopher Ratté. The Representative of the Ministry of Culture was Halil Yener Taş, for whose collegiality and helpfulness we are very grateful.

B. Current Work

As noted in previous reports, Notion is a coastal site approximately 35 ha in area, surrounded by 3 km long fortification walls (see fig. 1). It occupies a ridge running east-west and parallel with the coast, framed by two promontories projecting southward into the Aegean Sea. It is clear from the visible remains and from satellite imagery that Notion is a grid-planned city, oriented according to the cardinal directions. The promontories and the north and south slopes of the site are occupied by residential areas. The central ridge is dominated by a chain of public and sacred building complexes, set on terraces largely carved out of the native rock. These include, from west to east, the Temple of Athena, the Heroon, the Agora, the Theater, and the so-called East Agora. The highest point on the site is the hill east of the Theater, which rises to an elevation of 85 m asl.

Work in 2017 had the following major emphases:

- 1) Geophysical prospection of the southwest area of the city, together with select locations on the north and east
- 2) Documentation of civic and religious architecture
- 3) Documentation of quarries and local geology
- 4) Collection and study of surface finds
- 5) Site management plan and conservation

- 1) Geophysical prospection

Two forms of geophysical survey were carried out in 2017: magnetic survey (continuing the program begun in 2014), and ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey (undertaken for the first time in 2017). As in previous seasons, the magnetic survey was based on a grid of 30 X 30 m squares, laid out with a differential GPS system. A total of 30 full and 8 partial 30 X 30 m grid squares were surveyed with a Bartington Grad 601-2 fluxgate gradiometer.

The GPR survey was based on more limited and targeted transects. A total area of approximately 7.75 ha was surveyed with a combination of GSSI 200 and 400 MHz antennas.

The magnetic survey was directed by G. Tucker, a doctoral student in archaeology at the University of Michigan; the GPR survey was carried out by Fırat Yiğit. The results are shown in figs. 2-3. Of special interest are the structures revealed by the GPR survey on the terraces on the west side of the "East Agora," which are probably occupied by large peristyle houses, similar to the houses of Delos.

- 2) Documentation of civic and domestic architecture

Architectural documentation focused on the Temple of Athena, the fortifications, and the Theater.

The Temple of Athena was excavated by the French archaeologists P. Demangel and A. Laumonier in 1921. In addition to uncovering the in-situ remains of the temple, they dismantled a “Byzantine tower” just southwest of the temple, into which many blocks of the temple had been incorporated, and they arranged the surviving blocks of the temple around the building. The main effort of our work was to make a state plan and section of the temple (drawn at a scale of 1:25 by K. Toomasian, a graduate of the University of Michigan School of Architecture [see fig. 4]), and to record and catalogue a total of 133 blocks (see fig. 5). The dimensions of the temple are 9.39 X 16.04 m at the level of the euthynteria, and it was built entirely of marble (possibly imported from the same quarries north of the modern village of Ahmetbeyli that supplied the marble for the Temple of Apollo at Claros). As shown by Demangel and Laumonier, the façade of the temple was distyle in antis; among the interesting results of our study of the blocks is the finding that there was a niche in the pediment of the front of the building, similar to the niche in the pediment of the temple of Artemis at Magnesia.

Study of the fortifications, carried out by F. Rojas and A. Marko, focused on documentation of the masonry types and the configuration of the towers. A particularly interesting stretch of the wall, exhibiting several different masonry types and construction phases, was cleaned and carefully recorded (see fig. 6).

In our report for 2016, we requested that the trees growing in the Theater be cut, for the sake of both the study and the preservation of the building. Thanks to this important undertaking, we were able to examine the Theater in much greater detail than before (see fig. 7). The auditorium is slightly greater than semicircular in plan, with an estimated diameter of 70 m.; it has a total of at least 23 rows of seats, 9 in the lower cavea, 23 in the upper cavea (above the diazoma). The seats are built entirely out of conglomerate rock; the estimated volume of stone employed is 3,260 cubic m. We estimate the capacity of the Theater as ca. 3,500.

It is interesting to speculate on what percentage of the total population of the city this would represent. We know from documentary evidence that Hellenistic Notion had 2,000 citizens, which would give a total population of upwards of 10,000 (estimating at least 5 persons per citizen-household); this may, however, have included people living in the territory of Notion outside the city walls. Estimates of the urban population of Notion based on the area of the city range from 3,500 (at 100 persons/hectare) to 8,750 (at 250 persons/hectare); estimates based on the number of houses yield a number of 4,000+ (800 houses at 5 persons/house). The Theater could thus accommodate at least one third and perhaps a much larger portion of the total population of the city.

4) Documentation of quarries and local geology

Geologist P. Knoop (IT specialist, University of Michigan) and Brown University doctoral student C. Steidl continued their study of quarrying activity at Notion. They estimate that a total volume of 100,000 cubic meters of the local marble was removed from the site of Notion during the construction of the city. To put this in context, the total volume of stone used in the fortifications was approximately 55,000 cubic meters. But since at least 70% of stone removed from a quarry is discarded as waste, the stone quarries on site could only have

provided approximately one-half of the material required for the fortifications. Most of the remaining stone required was probably quarried for sources northeast of the city (just across the modern coastal road and outside our survey region).

5) Collection and study of surface finds

Collection and study of surface finds, begun in 2015, was continued in 2017 under the supervision of A. Commito. Finds were collected from a number of different areas of the site, including a several large houses, and the backdirt from illegal excavations. One such illegal excavation lies just north of the northeast corner of the Agora, and was dug into the fill of the terrace running along the north side of the square. It contains a higher preponderance of recognizably earlier pottery than is true of the surface assemblage, presumably originating from habitation levels cleared away during the massive leveling operations required for the creation of the Agora (see fig. 8). The pottery was studied by A. Berlin (Professor of Archaeology at Boston University).

6) Site management plan and conservation

Architects K. Velikov and G. Thün continued their work on a preliminary site management plan, in cooperation with University of Michigan conservator S. Davis.

C. Conservation Needs

Conservator S. Davis conducted a detailed survey of the condition of the major monuments of Notion. She recommends a number of preservation measures, ranging from rerouting drainage to protect the Temple of Athena and the Heroon from water damage, to potentially building a roof over the Bouleuterion to protect the seats from further weathering.

D. Conclusion

It has been a great privilege to continue work at Notion. The fieldwork for our survey is now finished, and we will begin work on the final publication of the results immediately, although we will need to return to study the finds now stored in the Izmir and Efes Museums in 2018. The survey has been very productive, and it has also laid the groundwork for an excavation project, which has the potential to improve our knowledge of ancient Notion considerably, and also to improve the security and accessibility of the site. This will be the subject of a separate application.

Illustrations

- Fig. 1 Plan of site
- Fig. 2 Results of geophysical survey
- Fig. 3 Results of GPR survey on terrace west of East Agora
- Fig. 4 Plan and N-S section of Temple of Athena
- Fig. 5 Scatter plan of blocks from Temple of Athena
- Fig. 6 Panoramic view of section of fortification wall on north side of city
- Fig. 7 View of Theater after cutting of trees and partial cleaning
- Fig. 8 Selection of finds from backdirt of robber's trench north of Agora

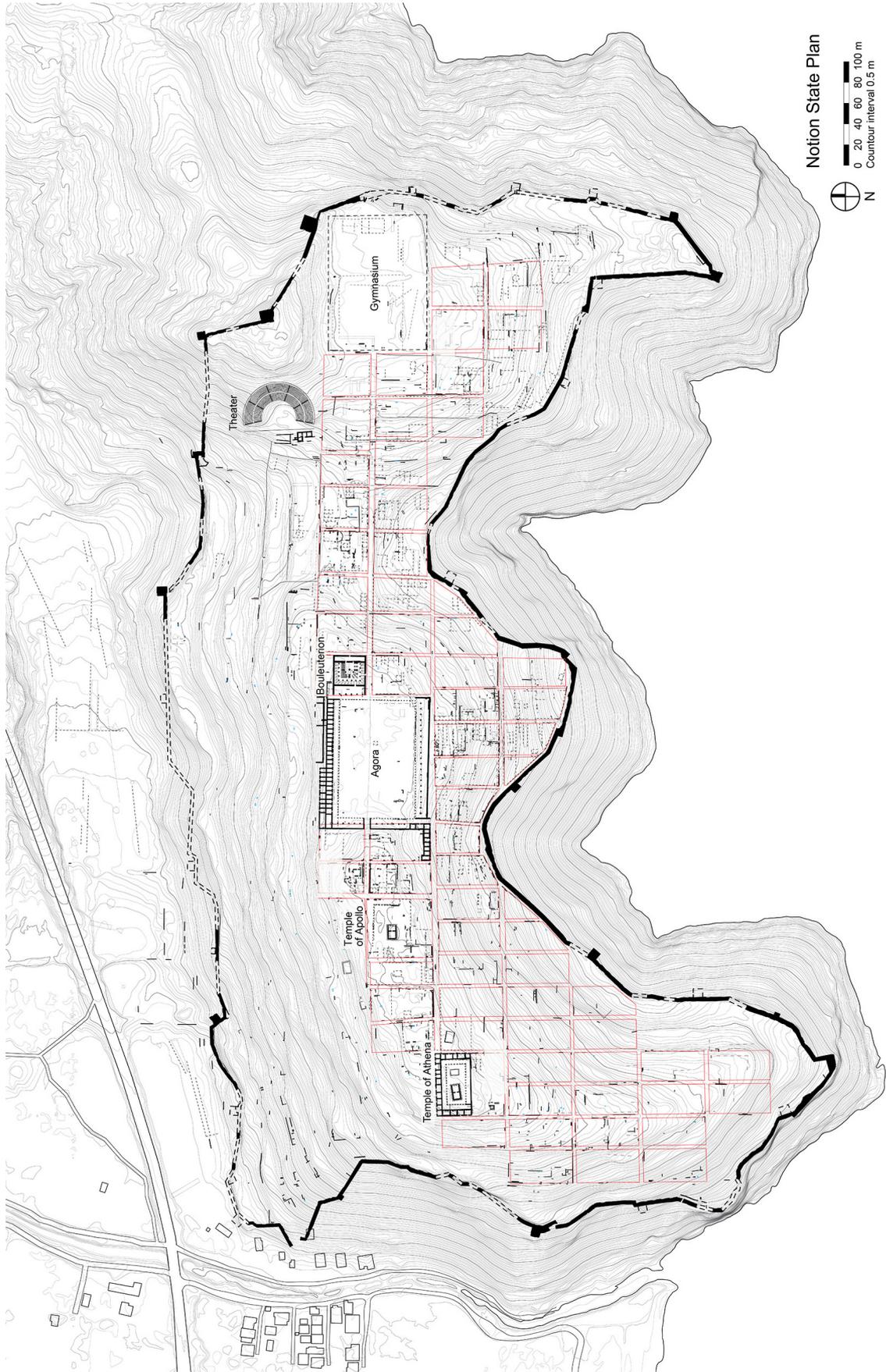


Fig. 1 Plan of site



Fig. 2 Results of geophysical survey (GPR survey areas shown in red)

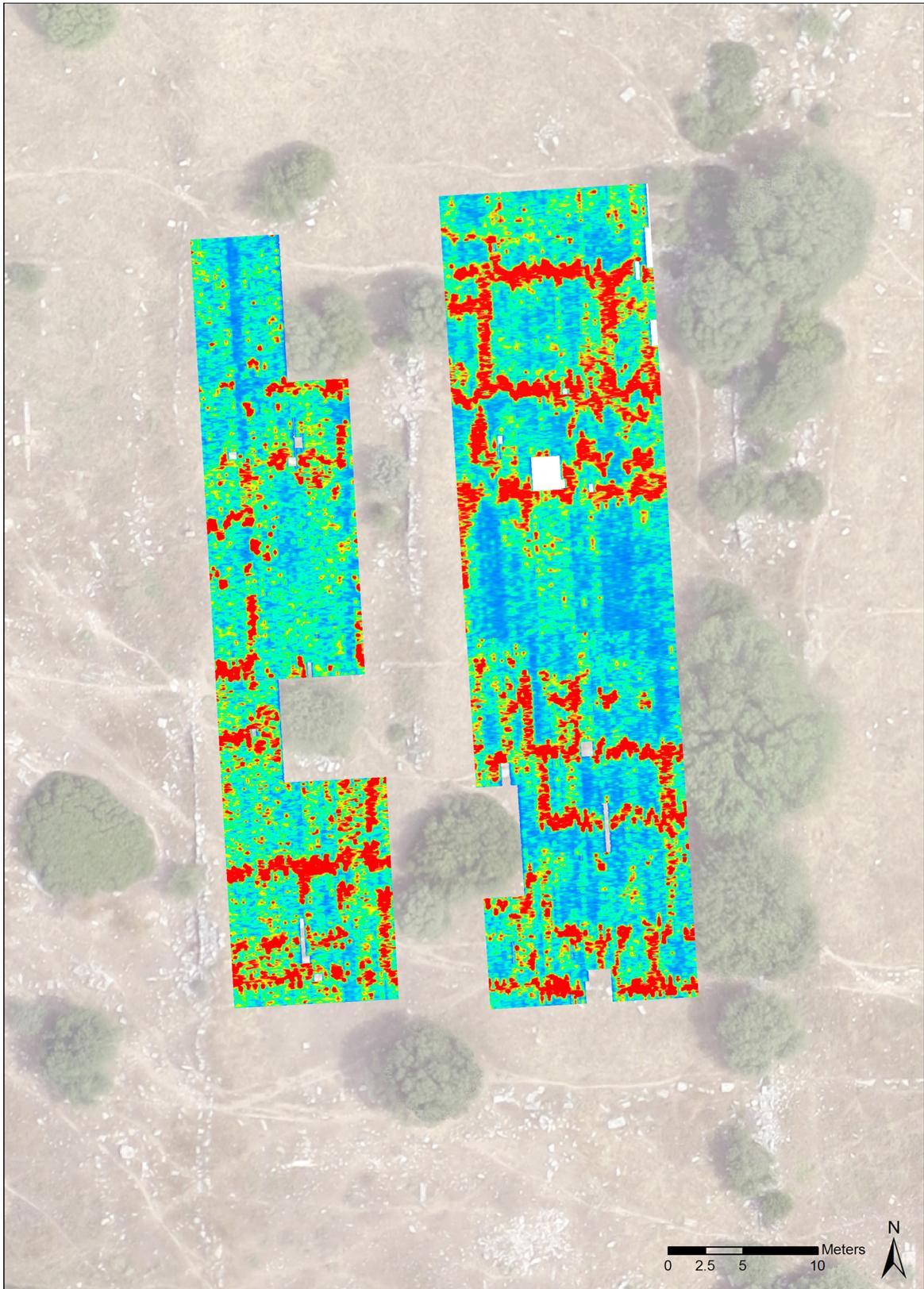


Fig. 3 Results of GPR survey on terrace west of East Agora

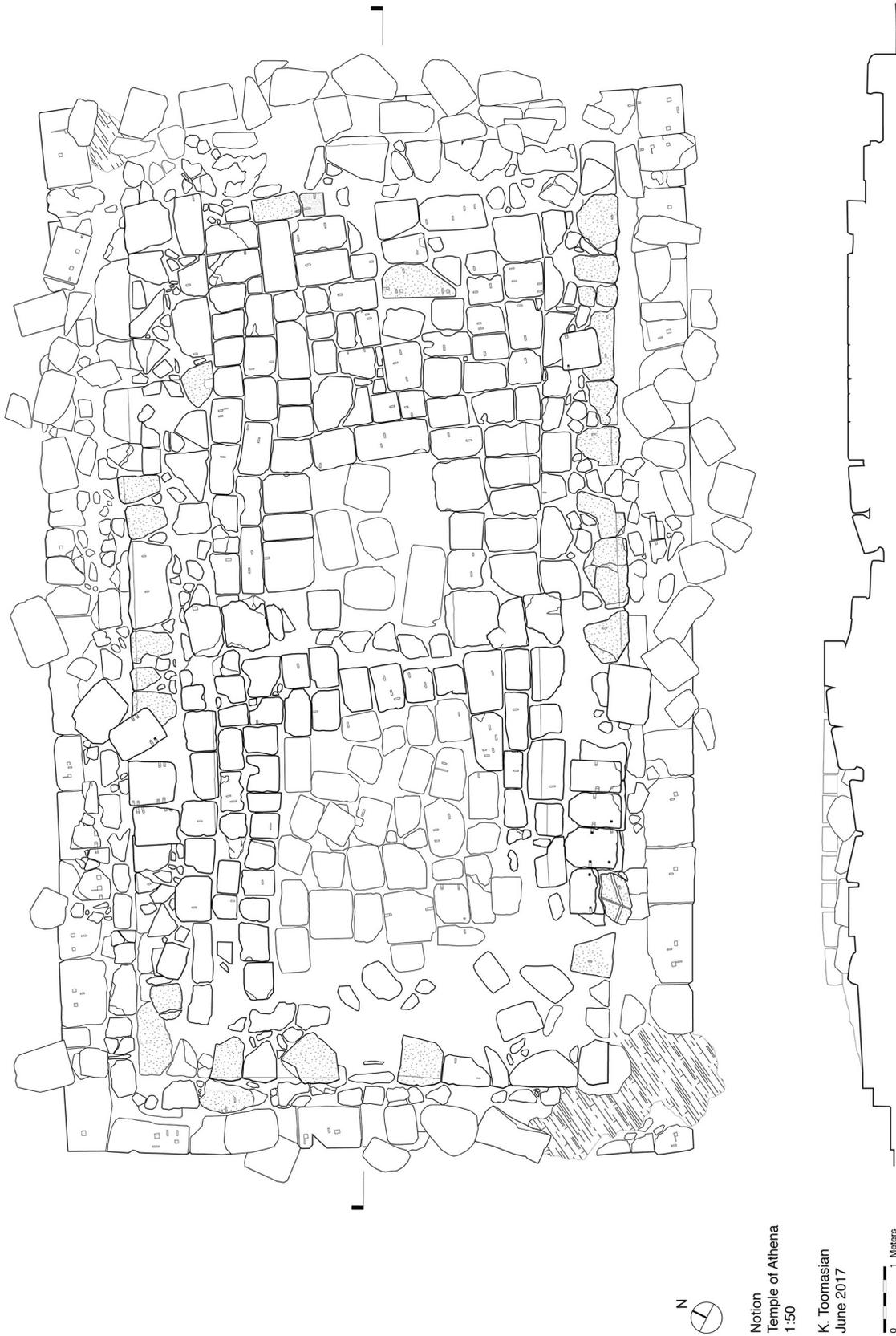


Fig. 4 Plan and N-S section of Temple of Athena

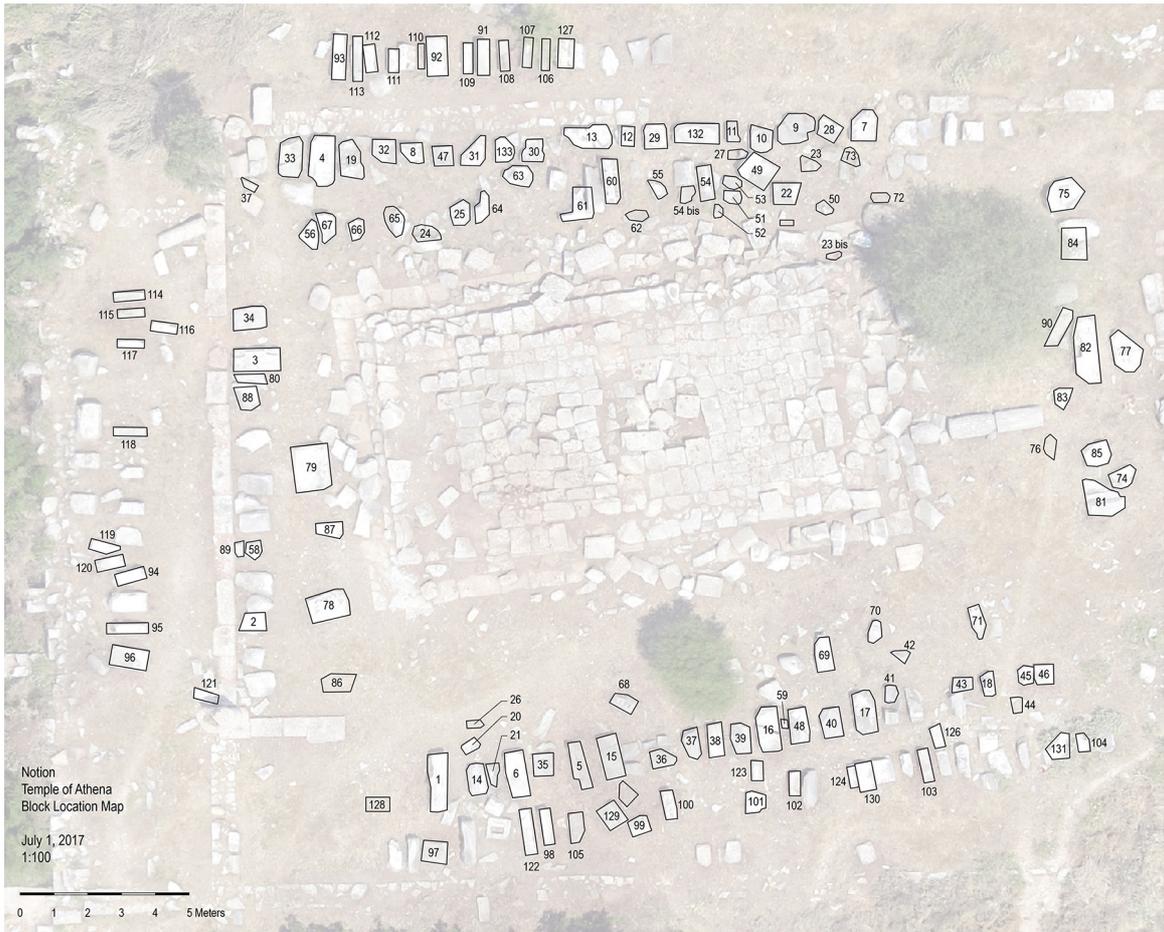


Fig. 5 Scatter plan of blocks from Temple of Athena



Fig. 6 Panoramic view of section of fortification wall on north side of city



Fig. 7 View of Theater after cutting of trees and partial cleaning



Fig. 8 Selection of finds from backdirt of robber's trench north of Agora