KMA KELSEY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

FALL 2014 NEWS
NEW FIELD PROJECT AT OLYNTHOS
This year marks the start of a new field project in Greece, co-sponsored by the University of Michigan along with the 16th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Archaeology (Thessaloniki) and the University of Liverpool (U.K.), under the auspices of the British School at Athens. The project sees the return of U-M archaeologists to Greece after a break of nearly twenty years, in order to work in the city of Olynthos in northern Greece. In its heyday during the late fifth and early fourth centuries BC, Olynthos was a regional power, before it was (reportedly) destroyed by Philip II of Macedon in 348 BC. To archaeologists, the city is equally famous for the large numbers of houses destroyed by Philip II of Macedon in 348 BC. To archaeologists, the city is equally famous for the large numbers of houses excavated there in the 1920s and 1930s, which remain our single best source of information about ancient Greek households. The research design of our new project is a multidisciplinary one that focuses on the use of modern scientific techniques to extend and enhance our understanding of Olynthian households, while at the same time contextualizing them within a larger urban framework. The project is also intended to build upon and bring to bear on the site the extensive work that has already been done there by the British School at Athens in the first half of the twentieth century, and continues the work of the Olynthos Excavation Project, directed by Professor Nicola T. ter, in its sixth consecutive season of excavations.

In its second year of fieldwork, the Olynthos project in Greece, cosponsored by the Joukowsky Institute of Archaeology at Brown University, is planned to continue next year.

NEW FIELD PROJECT AT NOTION
A major concern of contemporary archaeology is how archaeological sites come to the way they are when we find them. How are settlement mounds formed? What causes buildings to fall down, and why do they decay the way they do? Why are archaeological sites buried? The technical name for this set of concerns—what a normal person might call “taphonomy”—is “taphonomy,” the law of burial. As readers of this newsletter know, the Kelsey Museum began a new archaeo-
logical project at the site of Notion in western Turkey in June, together with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Brown University, and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. The project is based on the idea that there are very few traces of colonial buildings. We know, for example, that the agora, the main public square, was enclosed on all sides by colonnades, but very few column drums or pieces of the entablatures (the monumental lintel courses) of these porticoes remain. Where have all these large blocks gone? Examination of nearby villages suggests that they were not reused in medieval and modern buildings, nor do they seem to have been burnt into lime, for there are no traces of limekilns on the site. We considered the possibility that they had all rolled down the hillside and into the sea, but if that were the case, they would surely be visible in the clear waters now famous staircase, and the transition between elevations was further emphasized by a spectacular façade, a retaining wall built in ashlar blocks.

The complex has no parallel in the region of Rome, so its interpretation is difficult. The preliminary hypothesis is that it was a public building, with spaces designed for a variety of political and ritual functions. Stratigraphic evidence and construction techniques tentatively date the original phase of the building to the middle of the third century BC, making it one of the few—certainly the grand—examples of mid-Roman public architecture other than temples and fortifications in central Italy. Study of the architecture in the coming seasons will shed light on the development of Latin cities in the crucial and obscure period between the end of the Latin Revolt and the beginning of the Second Punic War.

Marcella Maggioni
Managing Director, The Gabii Project

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logical project at the site of Notion in western Turkey in June, together with the Joukowsky Institute of Archaeology at Brown University. Notion is a port town about 15 miles northwest of Ephesus, and it was occupied from the early first millennium BC through the Middle Ages. The first stage in our project is a thorough survey of the site, and since we are naturally understood to understand the “taphonomic” processes that lie behind its current condition.

In the case of Notion, however, taphonomy is something of a misnomer because in fact the site is not at all deeply buried. It occupies a pair of isolated promontories projecting into the Aegean Sea, and apart from airborne sediment, and earth that erodes down from the upper parts of the site to the lower parts, there is really nowhere for earth to bury it to come from. One interesting index of this condition is the number of exposed thresholds visible throughout the site—we counted a total of forty-six—so in at least one other possible answer to this conundrum, in a word, Constantinople. The new Rome was built substantially out of reused materials, and port cities such as Notion were prime sources of readymade columns and other architectural blocks. In this way, the buildings of Notion may have continued to function long after the site had been largely abandoned.