

Preliminary Report – Agora Excavations 2013

This report is based on one prepared for the student volunteers for them to take away at the end of the season. It is therefore to be regarded as very preliminary, and subject to considerable alteration as the material is studied more fully. Excavations were carried out between June 10th and August 2nd, with a team of up to 65 students drawn from some 25 universities in America, Canada, and Europe. We worked, as always, in close collaboration with colleagues from the A' Ephoreia of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, to whom we are most grateful: Nikoletta Saraga, Kleio Tsonga, and Maria Liaska.

Primary funding came, as always, from the Packard Humanities Institute, and it is a pleasure to record here our gratitude to the Institute and its president, Dr. David W. Packard. Other support this year came from Randolph-Macon College, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, the Dunlevie Family Charitable Fund, the Behrakis Family Foundation, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and the Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation. In difficult financial times, we are especially indebted to these institutions and individuals who make our work possible.

Several areas were opened, spanning Mycenaean to Byzantine times (**Plans 1 and 2**). Discussion of the future of the Byzantine remains prevented full exploration in the area of Beta Theta east and, at the request of the Byzantine Ephoreia, two deeper trial trenches were excavated to determine what earlier material might lie below the 11th century walls explored in previous seasons.

In **Section BΘ east**, supervised by Daniele Pirisino and Nick Seetin, advised by Mike Laughy., we sunk a small trial trench in the area in front of the Poikile Stoa (**Fig. 1**). Beneath Middle Byzantine levels of ca. 1000 AD, we encountered the abandonment fill of the 6th century AD found all over the area. Embedded in this fill, set on one end, was a large *inscribed statue base* of Hymettian marble (**Figs. 2 and 3**). The piece is 0.64 m. across the front, stands 0.50 m. high, and is 0.32 m. deep from front to back. In the top is an oval cutting for the attachment of a marble statue. Eight lines of text, in letters ca. 0.03 m. high, run across the front.

Ε Π Ι Π Ο Λ Υ Χ Α Ρ <Μ> Ο Υ Τ Ο Υ Ε Υ Κ Λ Ε Ο Υ [Σ]

Μ Α Ρ Α Θ Ω Ν Ι Ο Υ Α Ρ Χ Ο Ν Τ Ο Σ Κ Α Ι Ι Ε [Ρ-]

[Ε] Ω Σ Δ Ρ Ο Υ Σ Ο Υ Υ Π Α Τ Ο Υ Λ Ε Ο Ν Τ Ι -

[Δ Ε] Ω Ν Ο Ι Μ Ε Τ Ε Χ Ο Ν Τ Ε Σ Ι Δ Ρ Υ Σ Α [Ν]

5 Τ Ο Ν Ε Ο Ν Η Ρ Ω Α Ε Υ Κ Λ Η Ν Η Ρ Ω Δ Ο [Υ]

Μ Α Ρ Α Θ Ω Ν Ι Ο Ν Τ Α Μ Ι Ε Υ Ο Ν Τ Ο Σ Δ Η -

Μ Η Τ Ρ Ι Ο Υ Τ Ο Υ Α Ν Τ Ι Ο Χ Ο Υ Χ Ο Λ Λ Ε

[Ι] Δ Ο Υ

‘When Polycharmos, son of Eukles of Marathon, was archon and priest of Drusus Hypatos. Those of [the tribe of] Leontis (?), sharing, set up the new hero, Eukles, son of Herodes of Marathon, Demetrios son of Antiochos of Cholleidai being the treasurer’.

Characteristic letter forms are the alphas with curving, bent cross-bars, etas with short floating horizontal cross-bars which do not touch the vertical hastas, and omegas with small triangular finials which do not touch the round part of the letter. The middle stroke of the epsilon is shorter than the other two horizontals. There are incipient, restrained serifs on some letters, or at least a slight thickening at the ends of some strokes.

The date, in Augustan times, is given in lines 1-3 by the archon Polycharmos son of Eukles of Marathon, who also carries the title ‘priest of Drusus Hypatos’ (=highest or consul). Drusus, the brother of Tiberius, died in September of 9 BC, and soon thereafter the eponymous archon in Athens began carrying the title and duties as the priest of the cult of the deified Drusus (see also *IG II²* 1722, 1728, and 1730). Polycharmos seems to be the son of Eukles, the individual being honored.

Lines 5/6 preserve the name of the honorand in the accusative case: Eukles son of Herodes of Marathon. He was a well-known civic leader, serving as archon in 46/5 BC, priest of Apollo repeatedly between 42 and 10 BC, and as hoplite general. Eukles and Herodes are names which alternate from father to son in the family throughout the first century BC, the date of our base. Herodes (II) was archon in 60/59 BC. His son, Eukles (IV) was hoplite general at the time of the dedication of the Gate of Athena Archegetis leading into the Roman Agora (*IG II²* 3175: **Figs. 4 and 5**), and, with his father, seems to have arranged the financing with help from Caesar and then Augustus.. He is an ancestor of Herodes Atticus, the wealthy Athenian known for numerous benefactions throughout Greece in the 2nd century AD. In Athens, Herodes was responsible for the great marble Panathenaic stadium and the Odeion which still carries his name.

The title ‘new hero’, while not found in Athens, is known from three inscriptions elsewhere, in Macedonia (*SEG* 29, no. 580), the Sporades islands, (*IG XII*, 3, no. 880) and at Pergamon (*IvP* 8, p. 514). The verb ἰδρύω (line 4: *set up* or *establish*) can be used to refer either to a cult or a statue, so it is not clear if Eukles is actually being heroized or simply honored, though the latter seems more probable.

The last three lines preserve the name of the treasurer of the tribe, Demetrios, son of Antiochos, of the deme of Cholleidai, which belongs to the tribe of Leontis.

The proportions of the block are somewhat unusual for a statue base, being only 0.32 m. deep from front to back. There is a good explanation: the block has been recycled. Wherever the original top surface is preserved, around the oval cutting for the statue, much of it is covered with small letters of the type common in the 4th century BC and Hellenistic period (**Fig. 2**). Some 37 lines are only partially preserved around the edges, covering the left half of this upper surface. It looks

as though in its first use the block may originally have been a wall block or part of some large monument, inscribed on its face.

The new base, coupled with the statue base sculpted as booty (S 3557), found nearby two years ago, seems to confirm our assumption that the area immediately in front of the Stoa Poikile must have been regarded as a highly desirable location for significant commemorative monuments. The stoa, adorned with paintings and actual weapons deriving from military success, was among the most popular buildings of Athens; the orator Aeschines (III, *vs. Ktesiphon*, 186) set the scene in 330 BC: '*Pass on in thought to the Stoa Poikile too – the memorials of all your great deeds are set up in the Agora*'. Providing shelter for no specific function or single group, it must have been the most public building in Athens and therefore the area in front will have been crowded with monuments of all sorts, vying for attention from the Athenians and any visitors to the city.

A second trial pit was sunk just south of the midpoint of the Stoa. Low down, at the southeast edge of the cut, we encountered a large marble block, some 0.20 m. thick and measuring ca. 1.50 m. long where exposed, the edge heavily worn by foot traffic. (**Fig. 6**) Orientation and level showed it was the side of one of the cover slabs which overlay the *north channel of the Eridanos river*. It is possible to get a camera inside and see the channel itself, made up in part by reused blocks, at least one of them a gravestone with carved rosettes (**Fig. 7**). Fill was consistently of the late Roman period, suggesting that the ground level was kept deliberately low in the area in front of the stoa throughout antiquity, or that repairs to the channel were made repeatedly until the entire area was abandoned, in the 6th century AD..

In **B0 west**, under the supervision of James Artz, the Middle Byzantine levels continued to be explored (**Plan 2**). Pottery and especially anonymous folles (976-1034 AD) suggest that the area was in particularly active use in the years around 1000 AD. Rubble walls - incorporating much earlier material - packed earth floors, and the occasional pithos match the appearance of this settlement as found throughout this entire area north of Hadrian Street.

In **Section BΓ**, under the supervision of Laura Gawlinski, we continued our investigation in the Panathenaic way and around the *perischoinisma*. Of particular interest is the question of when the roped-off enclosure was in use in the 5th century BC. At the extreme east end of the section we exposed the northernmost corner block, giving us the sixth block found in situ along the north side of the enclosure. To the south, we excavated around the eastern base found last season. The block was found to be deeply embedded in the road; it is 0.30-0.40 m. high. A well-defined footing trench was found along the east and south side of the block (**Fig. 8**). Some of the associated road surfaces of hard-packed gravel were more helpful in terms of chronology than others. The contemporary road levels suggest that the bases were installed sometime in the second quarter of the 5th century BC. Running over the block, and thus providing a *terminus post quem* for its abandonment, was a layer which included a piece of black-glazed stamped ware, suggesting that the enclosure was covered over and went out of use no earlier than ca. 430-420 BC. A significant amount of footwear

on many of the blocks suggests that they were exposed in the roadway for several decades.

As it appears now, the enclosure runs across the full width of the Panathenaic Way, though on a seemingly unrelated orientation. Its position spanning the road and its date in the 5th century BC, suggest that it was used for some sort of crowd control for those entering or exiting the Agora square. One occasion when such a control would be useful is during ostracism, whereby some mechanism would be necessary to ensure that individuals did not vote more than once.

Further west, a trench across the road was extended in order to determine if the course of the road changed over time between the 5th century and the Hellenistic period. We also want to determine if this part of the road was open to wheeled traffic, and if so, at which periods.

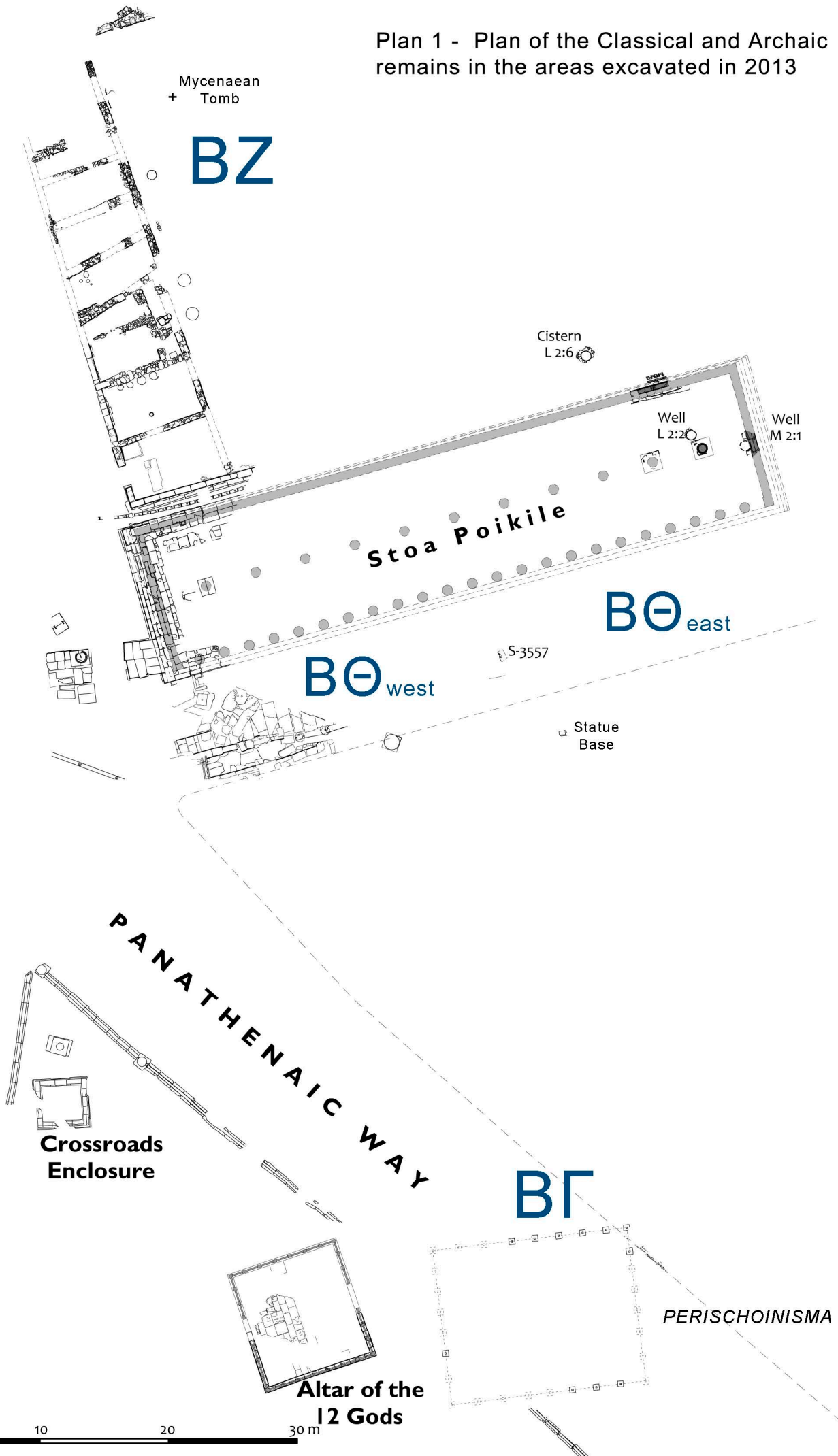
In **Section BZ**, to the north, Brian Martens investigated early levels behind and under the Classical commercial building. Assorted hard-packed fills were encountered, with fragmentary but high quality pottery of the archaic period found in numerous areas. In one enigmatic pit, into which a wall of the 6th century BC had been inserted (**Figs. 9 and 10**), we found two Mycenaean goblets (**Fig. 11**) and three stone spindle whorls, indicating that at least one *Mycenaean tomb* in the vicinity had been disturbed. Low down within the pit, the fill contained numerous scattered fragments of human bones, suggesting that the pit itself may represent the collapse of the central part of the chamber of a tomb originally cut into the surrounding fill. Maria Liston has identified parts of several individuals, both adults and small children or infants. (**Fig. 12**)

Also in this area, Bruce Hartzler and Mike Laughy used the new improved version of iDig in an attempt to determine the complicated phasing and complex stratigraphy of the Classical commercial building and its predecessors.

Logistical support of all sorts was provided from the Stoa by Craig Mauzy, Jan Jordan, Sylvie Dumont, Kate Tyka (museum studies intern), James Herbst, Annie Hooton, Maria Tziotziou, aided by three conservation interns, and Ing-Marie Raptis. It is a pleasure to acknowledge here their many contributions to the work. The final word of thanks goes to all the student volunteers for their congenial and productive participation in the excavations this season. We wish them well for the upcoming academic year.

John Camp
August 1, 2013

Plan 1 - Plan of the Classical and Archaic remains in the areas excavated in 2013



0 1 5 10 m



Plan 2 - Plan of the Byzantine remains (11th century AD) in Section BΘ West.

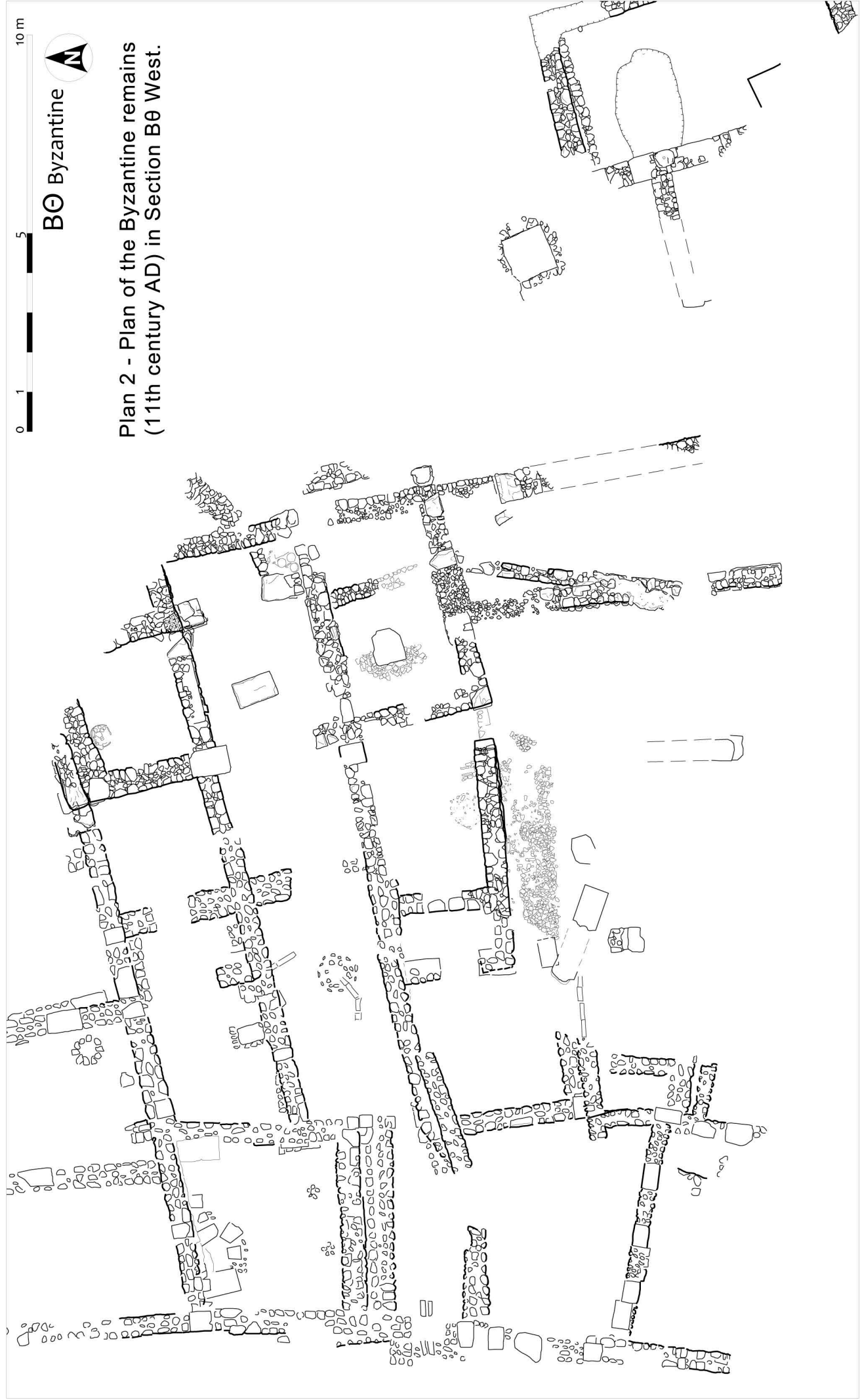




Fig. 1. Trial trench in Beta Theta East, looking east showing just the top of the statue base.



Fig. 2. Top of the statue base of Eukles, with the cutting for a marble statue and traces of the earlier Hellenistic/4th BC inscription around the cutting.

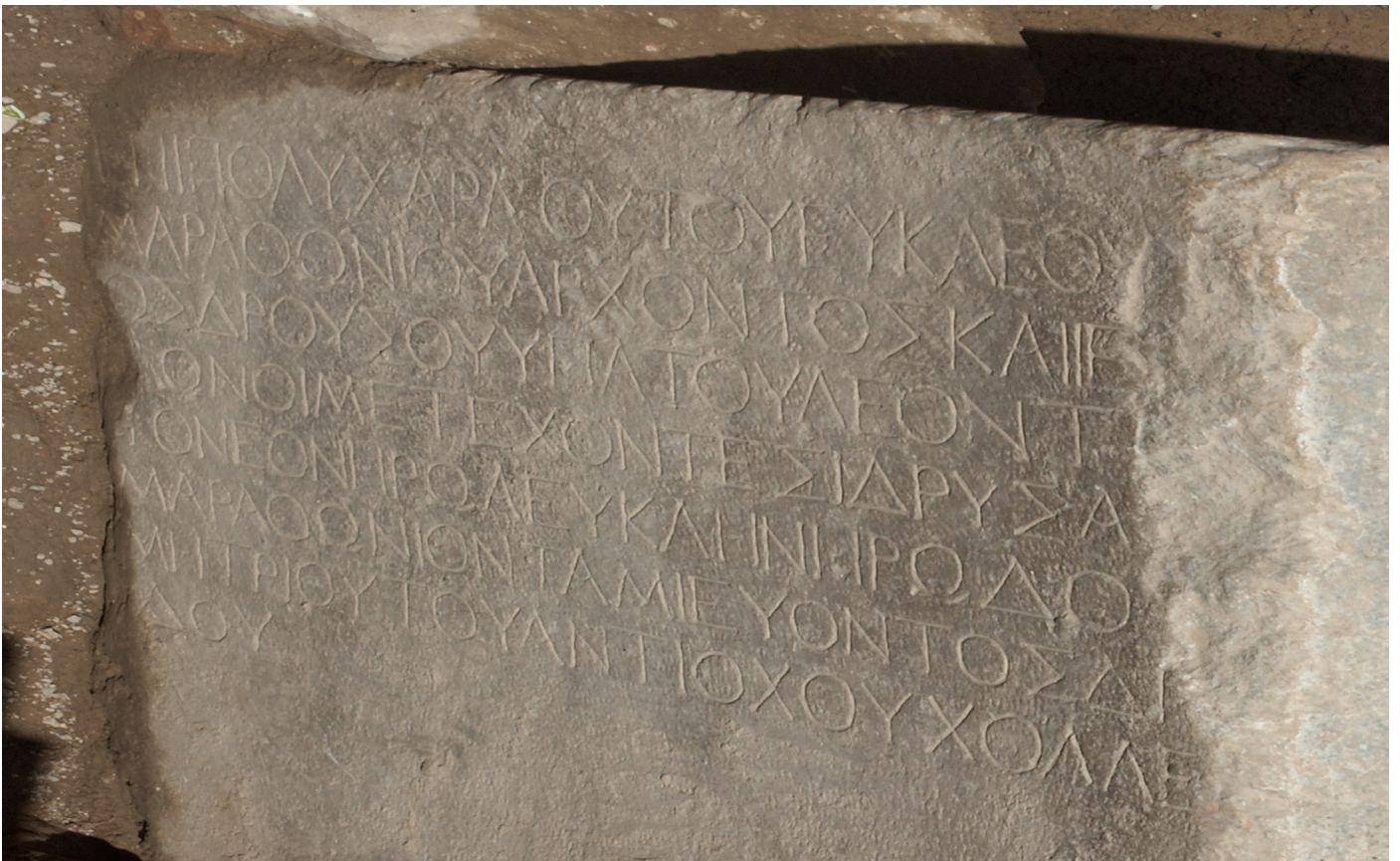


Fig. 3. Face of the inscribed statue base for Eukles of Marathon: 1st BC/AD



Fig. 4. Drawing of the Gate of Athena done by Edward Dowell in 1805. The name of Eukles of Marathon appears at the right end of the middle line. (No. 345 in the Packard Humanities Institute Dodwell Collection).



Fig. 5. The gate of Athena today; the architrave inscription survives, though it is very weathered.



Fig. 6. Larger trial trench with the edge of the cover slab over the river.



Fig. 7. Inside the Eridanos river, with the north channel at the right, and a re-used grave stele with mouldings and rosettes at the top. View looking northeast (upstream, toward Monastiraki).



Fig. 8. A stone posthole from the *perischoinisma*, showing the footing trench for its installation.



Fig. 9. 6th century BC lamp.



Fig. 10. Collapsed Mycenaean chamber tomb (14th century BC?) and the 6th BC wall across it; view looking north.



Fig. 11. Mycenaean goblet (kylix) and stone spindle whorls.



Fig. 12. Maria Liston holding a handful of skeletal remains.