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THE BOEOTIA PROJECT: FIELD SURVEY 1990

The 1990 season ran for three weeks, in July and August. The field survey programme was directed by Dr J. L. Bintliff of Durham University (formerly at Bradford), and Prof. A. M. Snodgrass of Cambridge University, assisted by Dr C. Heron, and Dr P. Spoerry. The assistant field directors were also concerned with geophysical survey on a Roman villa site, and the processing of surface pottery finds. Ms P. Griffin undertook the pottery processing, except for chronological analysis, which was carried out by Prof. J. W. Hayes. Other specialists were: Dr E. Terzis, collecting on-site and off-site samples for the ongoing research into trace metal accumulations in ancient landscapes; Ms S. Broadley, who completed a soil survey around the ancient acropolis of Hyettos; Dr P. Lock, who returned to three important nucleated sites previously surveyed by the project (Askra, VM4 and Thespiae) to plan standing remains of medieval churches. Mr M. Gillings was in charge of computerisation of survey results.

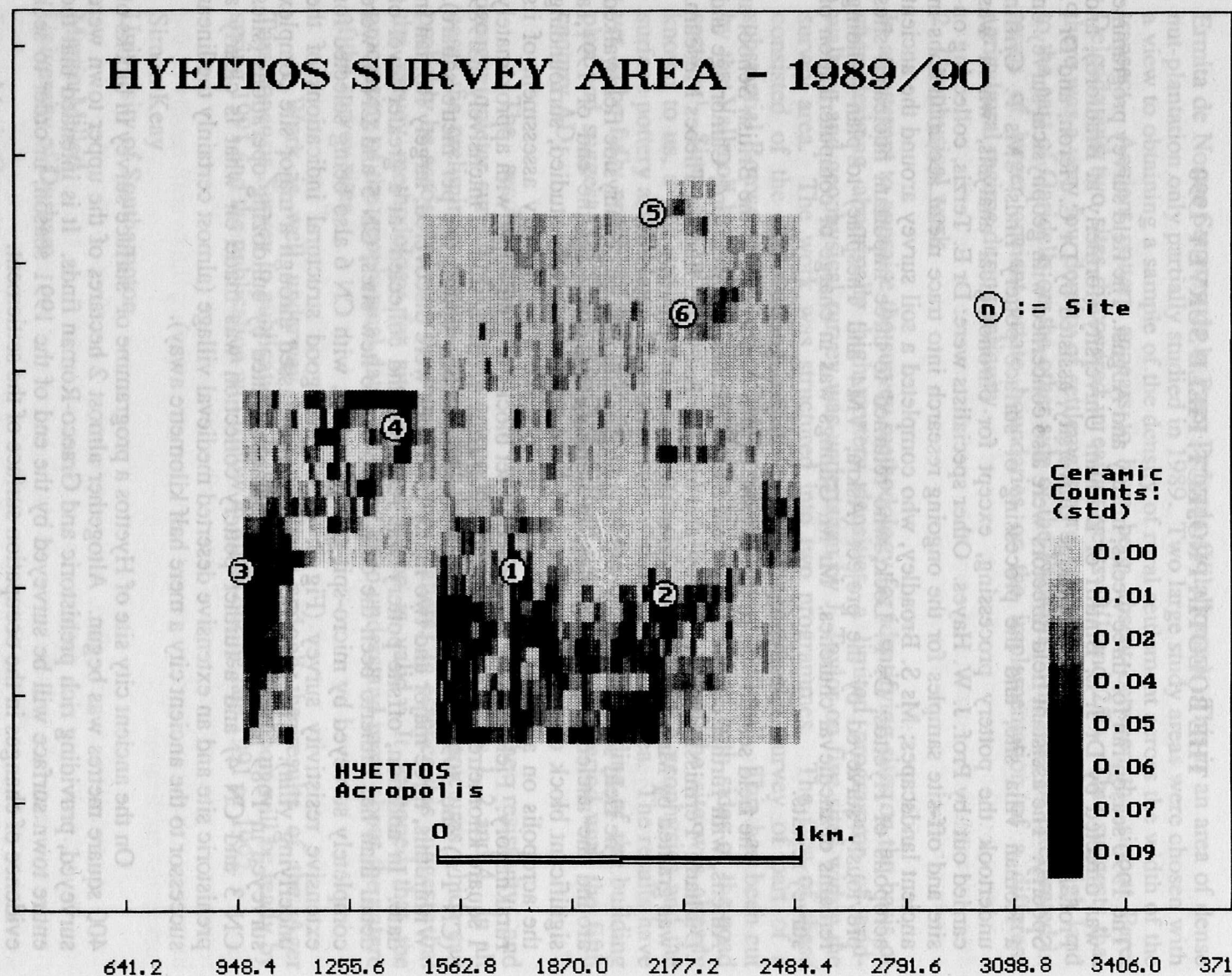
The field season was funded by the British Academy and the British School at Athens, with further contributions from the Universities of Bradford, Cambridge and Durham. Permission for the survey, and to study last year's finds in Thebes Museum, was granted by Mrs A. Andriomenou of the Boeotian Ephorate.

The field season was devoted to enlarging the area of countryside fieldwalked around the ancient city of Hyettos, in northern Boeotia. By the end of 1991, a significant block of the city's *chora* will have been intensively studied, surrounding the acropolis on all sides and allowing us to make a preliminary assessment of its rural history. Fieldwalking proceeded in set blocks of landscape, with approximately 1 square kilometre being covered altogether (Fig. 1: Sites studied intensively in 1989 (CN 1-4) and 1990 (CN 5-6) are numbered; ceramic counts are per metre square). Within this, three major and two minor rural sites were discovered, largely Roman in date. In addition, offsite pottery was recorded and collected at a greater level of detail than has hitherto been the case. Two of the new sites, CN 5 and CN 6, were completely surveyed by micro-spit grid recording, with CN 6 also being selected for extensive resistivity survey (Fig 2: this gave good structural indications of the underlying villa). The 1990 fieldwalking also passed through a major site complex surveyed in 1989 in a rescue programme necessitated by bulldozing operations (sites CN 3 and CN 4) and a further pottery collection was made on what is clearly a prehistoric site and an extensive deserted medieval village (almost certainly the linear successor to the ancient city a mere half kilometre away).

On the ancient city site of Hyettos a programme of surface survey in blocks of 400 square metres was begun. Altogether almost 2 hectares of the upper town were surveyed, providing rich prehistoric and Graeco-Roman finds. It is intended that the entire town surface will be surveyed by the end of the 1991 season, in order to seek evidence of changes in the occupation surface of the settlement.

The prolonged drought in Greece this year prompted us to revisit the remarkable site of Klimmataria in Lake Hylike, where we had carried out rescue survey with Thebes Museum in 1989. The lake level was over 10 metres lower even than in 1989, revealing new areas of ancient settlement below those visible previously. Study of the 1989 pottery from this rich site had shown traces of Imperial Roman activity alongside the much commoner Classical, Frankish and prehistoric material, but the main Roman Imperial occupation was only now visible alongside the new lowered shoreline. Our current interpretation of the site is of a small early and middle Bronze Age lakeside village, followed by construction of a finely-built Classical sanctuary complex. By Imperial Roman times, only the lower part of this site was in intensive use, perhaps for purely secular purposes, but associated with a large cemetery (initially thought to be medieval). The next phase of use is apparently

Fig. 1



the construction of a feudal complex focussed on a typical Frankish tower, with regular blocks of rooms of a homogeneous barrack-like plan on both sides. This hamlet continued in use well into the Turkish era, after which submergence is indicated by all later finds being rare and usually of marine type (eg net weights). During either the Turkish period occupation or a brief period of later low lake levels, two of the Frankish rooms were clumsily remodelled into rough sheepfolds.

A final discovery of note occurred during the planning of medieval churches by Dr P. Lock. In the centre of the ancient village of Askra, where surface survey several years ago had suggested occupational continuity between late Roman and high medieval times¹ - a locality significantly still known as Episkopi - the architectural survey of the overgrown remains of a ruined church revealed a very large and complex building. This may indicate the importance of the site in early medieval times, before its eclipse with the founding nearby of the Frankish tower-village of VM4.

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¹ J. L. Bintliff and A. M. Snodgrass *Antiquity* 62, 1988, 57-71.

Fig. 2

