

TEIRIAS

A Review and Bibliography of Boiotian Studies

Volume 40 (Part 2), 2010

ISSN 1206-5730

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EDITORIAL NOTES

The Society of Boeotian Studies (Εταιρεία Βοιωτικών Μελετών) held the Sixth International Congress of Boeotian Studies in Livadia in September of this year. The Congress was, as usual, a great success, and offered participants the opportunity to catch up on the latest developments in the field, and to get together again with friends and colleagues.

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Readers will be pleased to note the publication online of a beautifully produced and copiously illustrated electronic book on the Archaeological Museum of Thebes, by Professor Vassilis Aravantinos, Ephor of Antiquities: see 102.1.02.

WORK IN PROGRESS

102.0.01 John Bintliff sends the following report:

The Leiden-Ljubljana Ancient Cities of Boeotia Project, Spring and Summer Season 2010¹

This year marks the fourth season of fieldwork at the city of Koroneia in the Central Greek province of Boeotia (all previous work has been presented on an annual basis in preliminary form in *Pharos*). The year's work began with a study season in April 2010. A team of Leiden postgraduate students under the guidance of Dr. Philip Bes, Mark van der Enden and Prof. Vladimir Stissi studied the Koroneia city survey finds from previous years in the framework of an advanced training course in pottery analysis. At the same time our urban architecture specialist Dr. Inge Uytterhoeven (Leuven University) visited the Koroneia city site to undertake detailed recording of surface architectural pieces which had been noted during the course of survey in the summer of 2009. These were located to fine precision by Bart Noordervliet and Janneke van Zwienen with the aid of a Differential GPS device. The author began to recatalogue the Boeotia

¹ The Project is directed by Prof. John Bintliff (Leiden University) and Prof. Bozidar Slapsak (Ljubljana University). The Assistant Academic Director is Prof. Vladimir Stissi (University of Amsterdam) and the Assistant Field Director is Dr. Nasos Vionis (University of Cyprus). Mark van der Enden (Leicester University) is manager of the Ceramic Laboratory, and Bart Noordervliet and Janneke van Zwienen combine their roles as Project Digital Field Recording Specialists with being our overall Project Managers. The GIS specialist is Dr. Emeri Farinetti. Our accommodation at the Ecclesiastical Research Centre of Evangelistria is due to the kind support of Bishop Georgios of Thebes and Livadheia. The Project is enabled through the good offices of the Dutch Institute at Athens, whose staff have provided their usual full support throughout the year. Part of the funding is made available through the Inter-university Attraction Pole network of the Belgian National Research Council.

Project's finds from 1980-1997 which are kept in the Thespies Museum in preparation for assembling the final monographs of that earlier project.

In August the team returned for the main field season at Koroneia city. We continued with the gradual infilling of the city hill through a regular grid of approximately 20 x 20 m survey units (*Figure 1*). Following our previous methods, each such unit is first walked by two students, one crossing the square in a north-south direction, the other east-west, counting the density of surface pottery in a strip 1m wide by 20m long. A surface visibility measurement is also taken of these strips to allow correction to more realistic densities. Subsequently the entire square is walked by the students, converging from opposite sides of the square, in order to collect a large sample of the surface finds. As noted in the report for 2009, experiments by Mark van der Enden have shown that a concentration on 'feature pottery' is permissible owing to its greater value for chronological and functional analysis, so that most of the finds bagged by students are in this category. However special allowance is now made for the low recognisability and frequently small size of cookware and other coarsewares, through targeted collection strategies.

The number of grid units studied by the end of the 2010 season reached 842, and we are now in a position to evaluate the likely total extent of the built-up city at its maximum, as well as the scale of work still to be done to complete the complete surface examination of the settlement. To anticipate the details discussed below, we have produced a map with our best current estimate of the Classical-Hellenistic era city walls, including a southern extension of domestic housing which may or may not lie inside these walls (*Figure 2*). The area enclosed is then either 34.1 or 37.5 hectares.

One of the notable problems in Boeotia is the extraordinary density of surface pottery of pre-Modern date in the rural landscape. It is normal for carpets of ceramics to extend several kilometres out from ancient major towns and villages, and these increase in density as one approaches the boundaries of such settlements. In the absence of standing city walls, a fringe of recognisable extramural cemeteries, or other indications, locating the formal edge of an ancient nucleated settlement is therefore extremely difficult. In our previous researches in Boeotia we have been able to observe that surface domestic sites of all sizes from a family farm to the largest urban site have a tripartite zonation (Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 2007):

1. The core of the site, the focus of sustained domestic occupation, with the highest surface density of finds and those with the freshest appearance (brought to the surface from archaeological settlement deposits)
2. A site halo surrounds the site core. This consistently shows a lower level of surface finds' density to the core, and is a mixture of mostly worn sherds and a minority of freshly-broken material. On closer examination this zone runs from some tens of metres in a farm site to several hundred metres for a city site, and seems to be made up of rubbish dumping, burials, extramural 'infield' gardens, and occasionally sanctuaries and industrial areas.
3. Beyond this is found the off-site secondary impact zone of the site, a thinner carpet of surface sherds which declines with distance and varies in radius with the size of the site core. In the case of large cities this zone can be observed for several kilometres distance, for farm sites a few hundred metres. The material is usually worn and in Boeotia is believed to be almost entirely due to the artificial transport of settlement rubbish into the

community's agricultural fields for manuring purposes. Within this rural zone can be found farms, hamlets and cemeteries, but they are generally distinct through the quantity and / or quality of surface finds.

In 2006 density measurements had been taken in the rural landscape surrounding the city of Koroneia and it was clear that this city formed no exception to the scheme just presented. It was therefore anticipated that defining the borders of the town would create a research challenge, since up to 2010 only one short stretch of possible city wall had been identified. In the 19th century, Western Travellers had still been able to observe more substantial wall traces complete with towers, but the only other defensive or boundary walls we had recognised at the site since commencing intensive survey there were on the Acropolis, and these were of late Archaic-Early Classical and Late Antique date.

The city survey has been designed not merely to cover the entire town surface but also its immediate extramural sector, where urban cemeteries and other activities would be expected. Much of the work carried out in the 2010 field season was indeed carried out in what we believe is the inner halo (zone 2, above) or immediate extramural area round the city walls. A major aim was to try to use the quality of the surface finds, their size and freshness, to seek distinctions between intramural occupation debris and the dumping of secondary rubbish beyond the city walls. By and large this proved successful, but in some grids the nature of recent land use made such an analysis hard or even impossible: an area left without cultivation for some years will produce little surface material and it will be in a very eroded form, whilst an area subjected to unusually heavy cultivation can also see its finds diminished in their size and lose their freshness. *Figure 3* displays the density of surface finds, corrected for visibility, and excluding grid squares with very low visibility (3/10 or less of the soil visible) owing to sample error in such conditions. It is clear that remarkable densities continue to the foot of the Koroneia hill, well into areas we now know to be extramural cemetery zones. Except for one clear small area in the far south where a stream-course coincides with a dramatic drop in density, no other bordering areas show likely steep fall-offs in sherd densities appropriate to being outside the built-up urban zone within the putative city walls.

Fortunately three independent sources of evidence came to our aid, allowing a check on our purely ceramic estimates of the city's edge, based more on the condition of sherds rather than density. Firstly, advance mapping by Bart Noordervliet recognised two stretches of city wall foundation in the north-west part of the city site, one on the north-facing and another on the west-facing lower slopes of the Koroneia hill (*Figures 4-5*). These are in soft limestone and would not have been used above ground because of this rock's susceptibility to disintegrate in the open air. Now that parts of these sections are being eroded due to lack of maintenance of the terraces in which they are embedded, individual wall blocks are literally 'melting' into loose sand. Taken together with a putative but much shorter stretch of wall located in an earlier season on the southernmost side of the city-hill, these discoveries provide a much-needed independent check on the line of the pre-Roman fortifications of the city. Fortunately an unexpected second form of evidence emerged from the surface ceramics themselves. A series of large roof-tiles of Classical-Hellenistic type bore a distinctive stamp which clearly represents the city of Thespieae (*Figure 6*), a simple stamped monogram combining a Koppa (an early form of Kappa) and a Delta, and sometimes also an Alpha. Koroneia's early coinage bore the Koppa sign, and the combination on these tiles should represent the Damos or People of Koroneia. Our initial hypothesis is that these tiles are official roofing for the city wall, a proposal well supported by the

distribution of the tiles, which all lie in the general neighbourhood of the projected wall-line (*Figure 7*).

Yet a third element can be added to the cumulative sources for defining the maximum extent of the ancient city. As noted in previous preliminary reports in *Pharos*, two cemetery locations have already been identified during our progressive survey of the town site. One lies on the north-east lower hill perimeter and produced Archaic to Hellenistic grave goods. A second lies on the eastern lower slopes and is distinctive for the large quantity of architectural finds, including a tombstone of Roman age. During the 2010 summer season an almost continuous distribution of fineware ceramics ranging from late Geometric to Hellenistic in age was recovered during survey of the north-facing lower slopes of the city-hill. At one notable locality where the hill turns south, and near the stream which borders the west side of the city, a spectacular density of special finds was observed. The micro-collection of this material (largely of miniature vessels) was carried out under the supervision of Vladimir Stissi (*Figure 8*) and appears to represent votives from an extramural sanctuary. Immediately nearby were also robbed grave chambers and wider finds presumed to derive from burials contemporary with the sanctuary, of Classical to Hellenistic age. From this point running almost without interruption along the foot of the hill eastwards, and reaching to the small eminence of the Crusader tower, we found a series of foci appearing to represent burial finds of proto-historic to Hellenistic date.

One problem with all this material is the absence of a ceramic assemblage that can verify continued use of these areas for burial during Roman times, despite the clear evidence that the city remained a large nucleation during the Early Empire. This is a wider problem in Roman Greece, since both grave and sanctuary deposits lose their distinctive assemblages and in their place come ceramic and other finds which look equally at home in a domestic context. Given as noted above, that the extramural sectors of ancient Boeotian cities are covered with dense finds of pottery, there is serious doubt if specific Roman burial finds can be separated from dumping of urban refuse into the immediate extramural area. Indeed the discovery in 2009 of the Roman cemetery was not due to any unusual ceramic finds but rather to the agglomeration of broken architecture in one field just outside the suspected city wall line. We therefore were fairly certain that the pre-Roman cemeteries discovered in 2010 continued into Roman times on the north lower slopes of the city hill, but were unable so far to isolate ceramic signals that differed from domestic debris. It was thus a relief, as well as a remarkable discovery, when amidst this burial zone we came across a very unusual artefact (*Figure 9*) the lid of a Roman stone sarcophagus. The present author must confess that in thirty-two years of field survey in Boeotia, this is the first time he has found such an object in the field, and that should not surprise, since they have usually found their way into museum courtyards or been recycled into post-Roman buildings.

Although previous visitors to Koroneia had seen prehistoric material, if rare, we had till 2010 discovered hardly any such finds on the hill, and those identified tended to be isolated. In contrast this season produced a regular trickle of prehistoric sherds and some stone tools along the northern lower hillslopes. Medieval and Post-Medieval material remained confined to the immediate surroundings of the Crusader tower settlement identified in previous seasons, suiting our belief that this had been a small community settled around the tower itself.

Additional Investigations

Dr. Rob Shiel (Newcastle University) continued his mapping of soils and land-use in the hinterland of the ancient cities currently being studied by our Project. Professor Anthony Snodgrass assisted the author with the completion of the catalogue of all finds in the Thespieae Museum deriving from the older Boeotia Project. Dr. Kalliope Sarri with the assistance of Ms. Gry Nymo

restudied the prehistoric finds from the city and rural survey of the ancient town of Hyettos, as part of the preparations for the publication of this older fieldwork. Professor Vladimir Stissi worked on the proto-historic and Classical finds from the Tanagra rural survey and from the Koroneia city survey. Dr. Nasos Vionis continued his analysis of the Medieval and Post-Medieval finds from the Tanagra rural survey. At the time of writing, Professor Bozidar Slapsak and his geophysics team from Ljubljana University will recommence their surface survey at the city of Haliartos and continue taking aerial photographs of the Project's urban sites.

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FIGURE 1: City survey grid units completed between 2007-2010 (B. Noordervliet and J. van Zwienen)

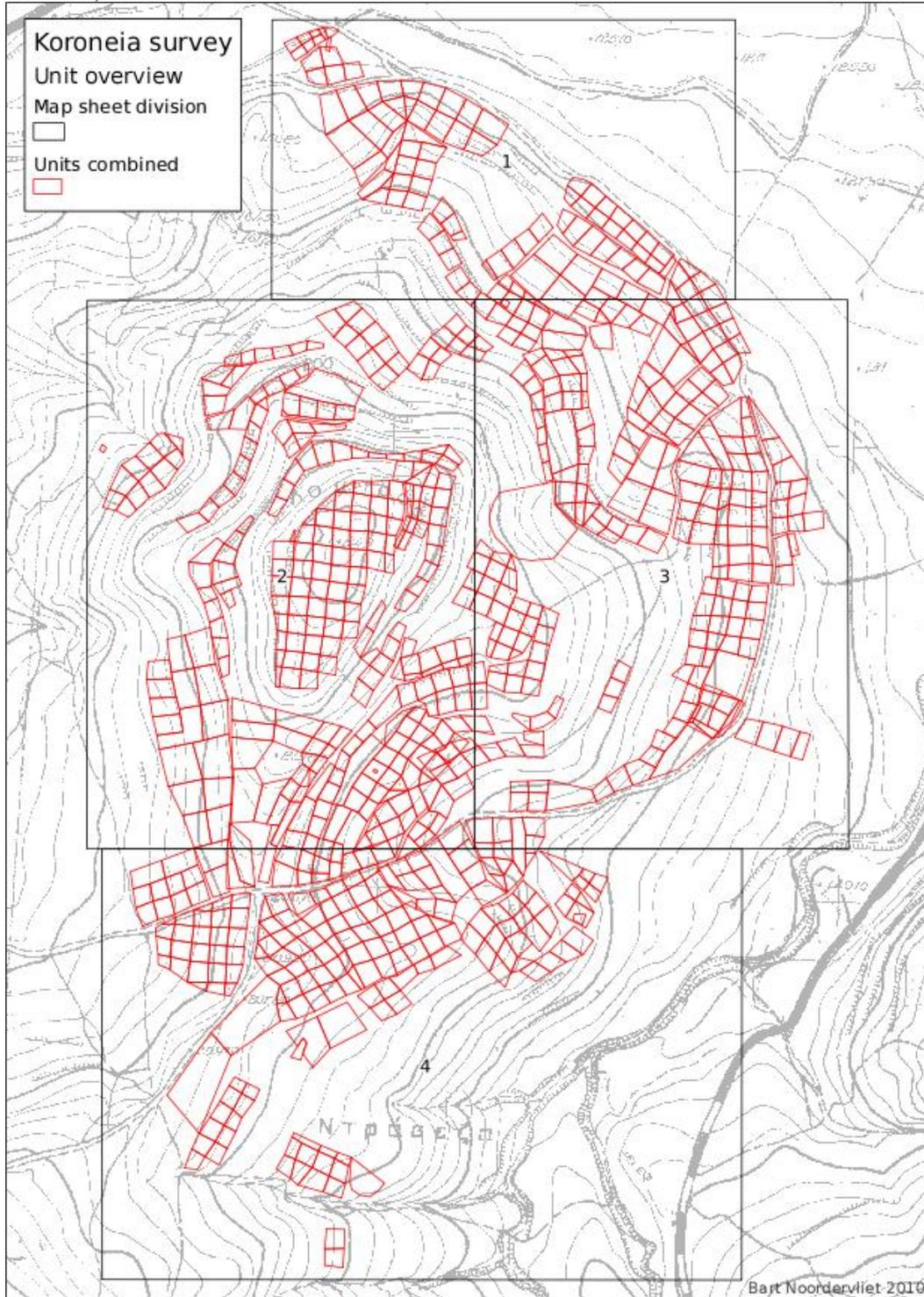


FIGURE 2: The current estimated line of the Classical-Hellenist town walls of Koroneia, with and without the southern domestic extension (B. Noordervliet and J. van Zwiienen)

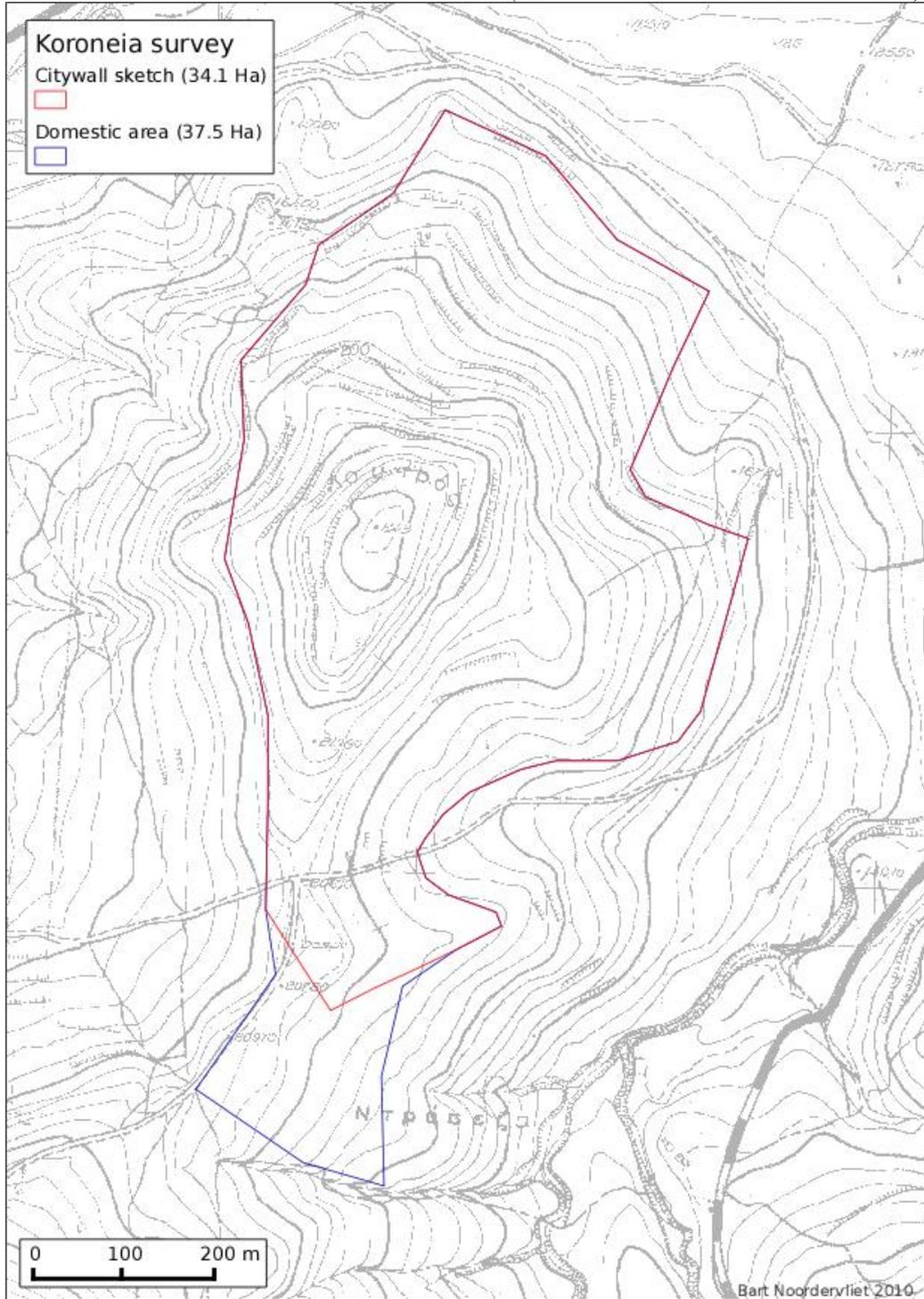


Figure 3: Density counts for surface finds at Koroneia corrected for visibility and omitting the areas of least surface visibility (B. Noordervliet)

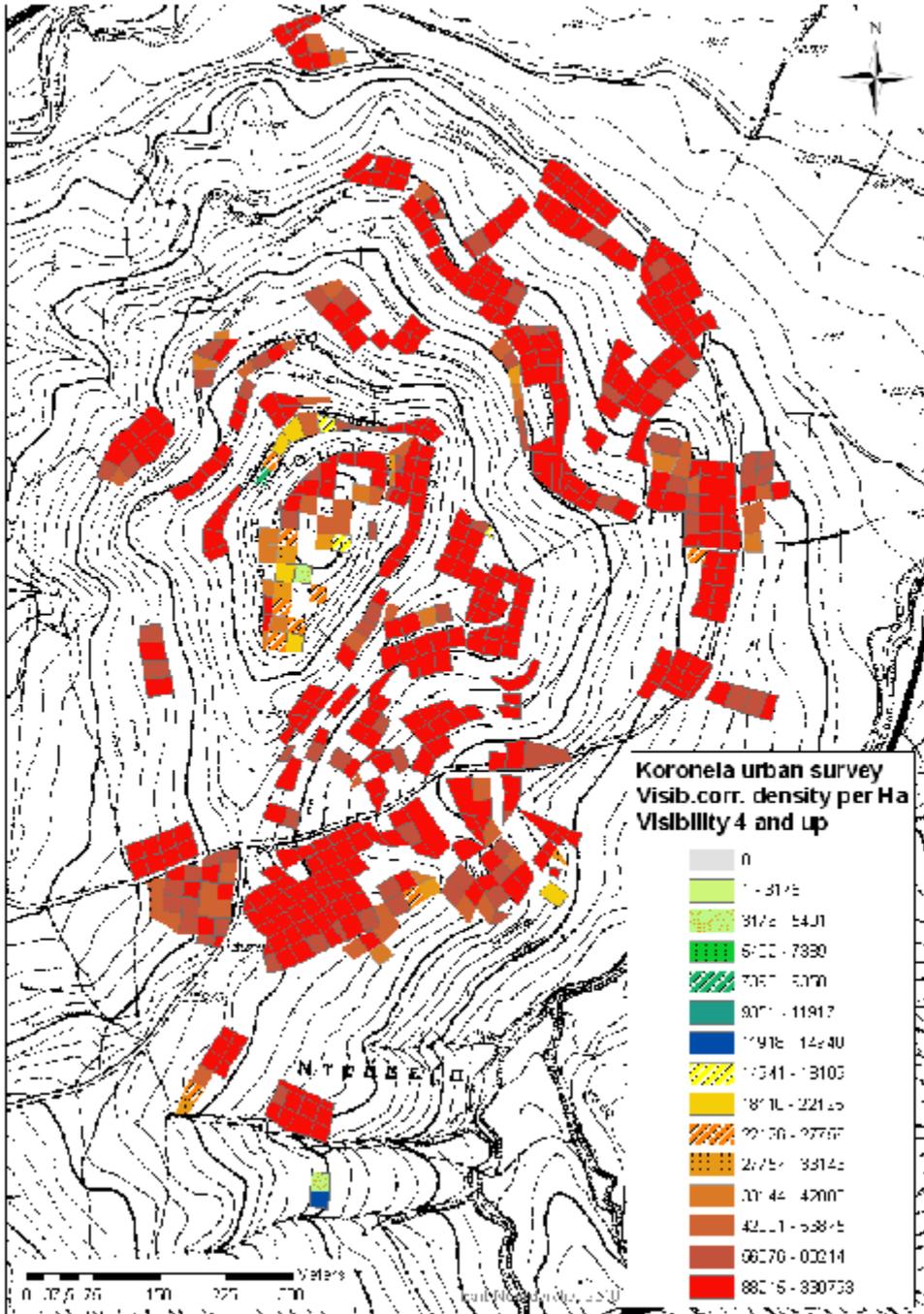


FIGURE 4: Foundations of the Lower City wall facing northwards, in the north-west hill perimeter



FIGURE 5: Foundations of the Lower Town city wall, west-facing section, lower hill perimeter



FIGURE 6: Official city tile



FIGURE 7: Distribution of tiles stamped with the city monogram (courtesy Bart Noordervliet)

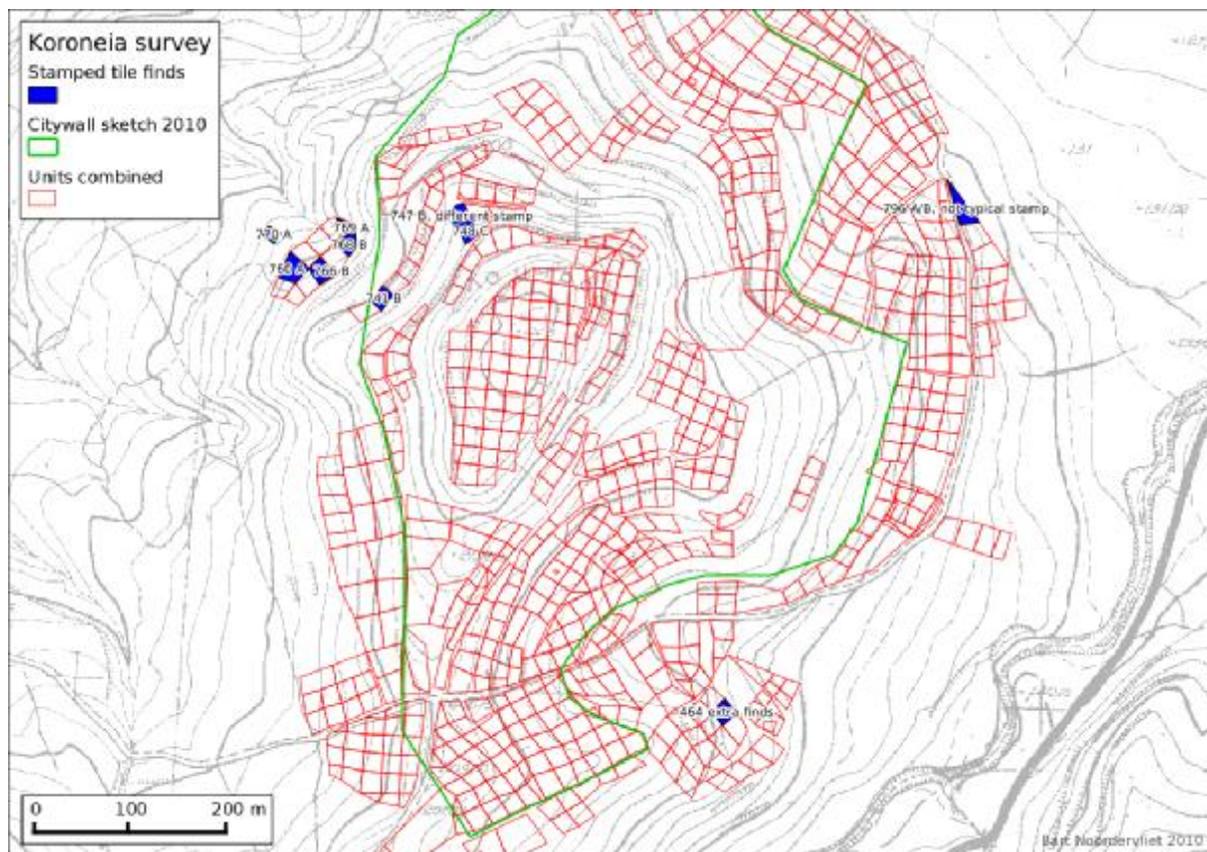


FIGURE 8: Sanctuary deposit from outside the north-west city wall



FIGURE 9: Roman sarcophagus from the extramural cemetery zone on the northern slopes of the city hill.



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