

Suggested Citation: Caraher, William R. "Extensive Team Report on Investigations at Frankolimano, 2001." EKAS Field Reports. Ancient Corinth: The Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey, 2001.

Extensive Team Report on Investigations at Frankolimano, 2001

Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey

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July 30, 2001

At the end of the 2001 EKAS field the extensive team conducted a preliminary extensive survey of the area inland from the harbor at Frankolimano. J. Wiseman reported that it was a favorite spot for sponge fishermen, the largest cove between Kenchreai in the north and Korphos in the south and that “the deep water...is marvellously buoyant and refreshing for the swimmer.” The only archaeological remains he associated with this area was a long rubble wall 1.4 m thick running just inland from the bay and a low density scatter of “Hellenic” sherds along the beach. The remains of this wall are difficult to discern today and may have been obliterated by a modern camping area and the partitioning of the coast into private plots. A very low-density scatter of pottery still exists along the beach.

The Extensive Team’s investigation of this area sought to determine the relationship between the area right around the cove and the interior. Since only one day’s worth of fieldwork was conducted here during the 2001 season, the findings are extremely tentative. The path walked was recorded in the GIS, but I recorded no formal EDUs here since this region was outside of the area stipulated by the permit and we had only a limited amount of field time to explore a large area. The focus of the investigation is the northern most of the several drainages which enter harbor basin from the interior. This drainage flows west to east directly to the south of the tall ridge which forms the northern edge of the cove and dominates the coast line as far west as the Vayia River delta.

Our path of investigation began along the course of the modern road running westward above the drainage and at the base of the coastal ridge. This road appeared to have been recently bulldozed. It terminated at an old farmhouse which now seems to have been abandoned. Occasional investigations of the terraced fields to the north of this road produced no ceramic evidence.

Near the old farmhouse the road forked with a path leading to the southwest across the drainage. We followed this path as it ascended the well-forested southern side of the main east-west rema and crossed numerous smaller gullies. There were no ceramics observed, but visibility was especially poor on account of the soft carpet of pine needles. There was evidence, however, for earlier intensive cultivation here in the numerous terrace walls in significant disrepair. The large pine trees which often have grown through and in the terrace walls suggest these fields have not been in use for some time. These overgrown field walls mark the east extent of our extensive investigation.

From here we turned back to the east while continuing to ascend the southern slope of the large east-west rema. To the south and east of the overgrown terrace walls there are a series of fields which remain in use. There is a large cistern with a concrete cap, the remains of a farmhouse, and numerous terrace and field walls. The improved visibility in these fields did not reveal any significant concentration of ancient pottery, although only a small percentage of this area was investigated. Our path in the eastern

direction stopped at a north-south drainage with steep sides. We returned the way we came walking north across the main east-west rema toward the first farmhouse we investigated.

Returning to the north side of the east-west rema we ascended the coastal ridge to the west of the geodetic marker. Following the highest point of the ridge we walked east toward the cove. There was little pottery on this ridge although immediately to the west of geodetic marker two early Helladic sherds were found. Some 250m to the east of the geodetic marker stands a small structure. The structure was 2.5 m by 5 m and constructed of rough fieldstones without any evidence for mortar. The walls stand to .8 m at their greatest height and there is little evidence for tumble. The structure is abutted to the west by a wall running for nearly 20 m westward with evidence for an opening some 8 m from the west wall of the building. We noticed no ceramics either within the structure or in its general vicinity. A series of terrace walls proceed down the slope to south of the structure. The view from this structure is impressive. To the east Oneion is clearly visible with Stanotopi and the Oneion fortifications falling easily within this structure's viewshed. The coast is likewise in view from north of the canal to Loutro Elenis. Vigla does not appear to be visible. Evrianisos and the entire cove at Frankolimano can be seen to the east and south. Despite this impressive viewshed, the buildings small size and relationship to the terrace walls along the southern slope of the ridge suggest that it served an agricultural function rather than a military one.

The cove at Frankolimano relates to the southern harbor at Lychnari (the Vayia river delta). It seems clear that the northern most drainage from Frankolimano provided access to the impressively terraced fields at EDU 6526 before the modern road was bulldozed around the top of Limnoula hill. The possible Classical site at EDU 6524 (Ano Vayia) would appear to be positioned to take advantage of both a view of the southern harbor at Lychnari and the rema running eastward toward Frankolimano. Whether this view, in fact, is possible should be investigated either through GIS viewshed analysis or autopsy. It would be valuable to investigate the area around Frankolimano more fully in order to ascertain its relationship with the settlement at Vayia. Further investigation of the Frankolimano harbor would also produce a better understanding of this areas relationship with settlements to the south. The lack of visible structures of potentially ancient date or dense concentrations of ancient ceramics suggests at first glance that despite the quality of the harbor this area was used more sparingly than other Saronic harbors in the eastern Korinthia. More intensive study, with geomorphological analysis, however, might produce another view.