

The Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey: A Report to the Ministry of Culture, 2002

Recommended Citation: Gregory, Timothy E., and Daniel J. Pullen. "The Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey: A Report to the Ministry of Culture, 2002." *Ancient Corinth: The Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey, 2002.*

Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey – 2002 season

Under the direction of Professors Daniel J. Pullen (Florida State University) and Timothy E. Gregory (Ohio State University), the Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey conducted fieldwork and study from 3 June to 12 July 2002. The project operated under a permit granted by the Ministry of Culture to the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Special thanks are due to the Fourth Eforeia of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (represented by Mrs. P. Kasimi) and the Sixth Eforeia of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Antiquities (represented by Mrs. K. Skarmoutsou). The research team was composed of 15 individuals (5 specialists: archaeologists, ceramic specialists, geoarchaeologist, and geologist, and 10 students from universities in the USA, Canada, Belgium, and Australia). The Field Coordinator was Thomas Tartaron (Yale University), while geomorphology was supervised by Jay Noller (Oregon State University).

Activities in the 2002 season included survey and documentation of the sites of Vayia and Vigla; survey of the Ayia Aikaterini basin; further study and documentation of 37 LOCAs (sites) discovered in previous seasons; geophysical work at Kromna (LOCA 9003); and study and documentation of the small sample of materials removed from the field and housed in the Isthmia Museum. The total area covered in 2002, in accordance with the permit, was 0.75 km² (Ay. Aikaterini: 0.45 km², Vayia: 0.15 km², Vigla: 0.15 km²). See maps, Figures 1 and 2, for 2002 survey areas.

1. Vayia = LOCA 9035

The archaeological remains at Vayia are spread widely across a large, gently sloping hill overlooking the Saronic Gulf between two small coves known as Lychnari (to the west) and Vayia (to the east). The physical remains consist of a broad scatter of collapsed walls and structures, along with an extensive but patchy spread of artifacts, mainly pottery sherds but also including fragments of ground stone implements. Over seven field days, a site plan was prepared using a Topcon GTS-213 Electronic Total Station. This work was accomplished with some difficulty as the site is quite overgrown; the collapse of architectural features is considerable; and much of the stone from the walls and structures has been pushed aside or removed in more recent times. As part of the site mapping project, we documented through drawing, measuring, and photography the essential features of the architectural remains. Chronological and functional information was drawn from analysis of the artifacts recovered in walking Discovery Units. Periods represented on the site are primarily Early Helladic II and Early Modern, along with Late Helladic, Classical, and Roman in certain areas. Much of the EH II pottery has calcium carbonate crusting, similar to many of the stones of the features.

The principal architectural remains seem to be a series of round structures, probably collapsed towers, connected by walls, situated on the hilltop, dating to the EH II period by

associated pottery. Later periods of activity altered the structures and built new ones. Several well-preserved square structures are Early Modern, but incorporating ancient walls.

Some 100 m to the west of the EH II site another set of walls overlooking Lychnari Bay most likely dates to the Classical period (LOCA 9232). On adjacent hilltops to west of Lychnari Bay (LOCA 9233) and south of Vayia (LOCA 9156) are towers of the Classical period. These were documented and reported to the Eforeia. Thus there seems to be a substantial fortification of the area during the Classical period, perhaps oriented to the sheltered Lychnari Bay.

2. Vigla

Vigla is located on top of a ridge overlooking the Saronic Gulf and a marsh, just to the east of Kato Almiri. We mapped a number of features, including those identified as a threshing floor, rock piles, a basin, cut stone blocks, the course of a wall, and rubble walls. Artifact density is high on the upper section of the ridge but decreases downslope to the south. There are a number of distinct features here: a rock-cut cylindrical basin and an adjacent rectangular basin; a large cut block and unfluted column are present; a Wiseman (*Land of the Corinthians* 1978) pottery pile can be seen here; and a threshing floor marks the NW boundary. The relatively flat area (DUs 2070–2077) at the top of the plateau overlooking the Saronic Gulf exhibited very high artifact densities. A transect running from the top of the plateau northeastward as far as the sinkhole revealed much lower densities (DUs 2079, 2081, 2083, 2085) than the units on top, though the densities remain relatively high all the way to the sinkhole. A second transect from the top of the plateau northwestward along the bluff that overlooks the road to Vayia (DUs 2078, 2080, 2082, 2084) had low artifact densities, probably because visibility was poor and soil was compacted. Most artifacts were seen in rubble piles, perhaps suggesting their use in the construction of walls. The rubble piles are low, probably the remains of rubble-constructed walls and buildings. No collections of artifacts were taken from the rubble piles. The ancient material here is generally from the classical period.

3. Ayia Aikaterini/Lakka Skoutara

The small upland basin east of Sophiko, locally known as Lakka Skoutara (or Ayia Aikaterini), was surveyed over a period of 5 days, using the standard EKAS field methodology of past years. DUs were laid out in order to capture a variety of landscapes including the talus slopes/alluvial fans of the edge of the valley, the valley bottom, and areas near the sinkholes and drainage. Artifactual material was not very high. There was a substantial Final Neolithic presence in the southwest, much medieval in the middle, and scattered remains of other periods including Mycenaean, Greek (Archaic and Classical), Roman, and early modern. The discovery of the Final Neolithic material is the first of this period in the EKAS permit areas. In addition we documented many of the early modern structures, alonia, cisterns, and wells in the valley.

4. Geophysical Studies

During the 2002 season, magnetometry and resistivity prospection was supervised by Dr. Apostolos Sarris of the Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies in Rethymnon. Three locations were chosen for geophysical investigation: 1) The eastern portion of the site known as “Kromna,” where we recorded high surface artifact densities, including copious limestone architectural blocks and sherds from ceramic vessels characteristic of local Classical and Hellenistic period sanctuaries. 2) A possible cemetery, in use at various periods from Geometric to Roman times, on an adjacent ridge at the

southern extent of Kromna. 3) A field in which massive quantities of rooftiles and sherds, mainly of Roman to late Medieval date, were found just north of the Rachi Boska ridge in the location "Perdikaria." This last area was investigated at the request of the Eforeia.

Preliminary Results of Geophysical Studies

Dr. Sarris is currently analyzing the data, but a few initial comments are possible.

1) Kromna sanctuary (Figure 3). The data did not reveal clear traces of any kind of a complex of buildings, such as might be anticipated for a historical sanctuary. Several anomalies were recognized, and further analysis is required before any conclusions are possible. The large east–west feature near the middle of the grid is the modern paved road. Interesting anomalies include a linear/curved feature south of the modern road, which may be a road or even a set of walls. In the northeast portion of the grid, two fired features were revealed that may be kilns. Finally, in the northwest portion, some rather ambiguous anomalies seem to possibly mark out an architectural complex. The patterns seen in the geophysical output are currently being analyzed in light of the archaeological surface data.

2) The Kromna graves area. These results appear to be the least positive, because it is difficult to identify any clear anomalies. A regular pattern of magnetic highs may relate simply to the location of trees, but there is also the possibility that they mark out the locations of looting trenches, the result of illicit digging a few decades ago in this area that is widely known among locals for the presence of ancient burials.

3) Perdikaria (Figure 4). Just downslope from the ridge known as Rachi Boska, also well known as the prehistoric site of Perdikaria, EKAS in 2001 recovered massive amounts of broken pottery, glass, rooftile, and other materials in a group of fields south of the paved road, dating to the Roman–Late Medieval period. The geophysical data image shows the clear outline of a very large anomaly that consists, near the top (north) of the grid, of a long, linear feature trending northwest–southeast. This anomaly is almost certainly a large building. The long axis is on the order of 30 meters (each individual grid square is 20 x 20 m), and within the structure, interior rooms and possibly corridors can be discerned. The long axis of the building is oriented sub-parallel to the modern east–west road north of the field. South of this structure, a second anomaly, less striking but adequately distinct, seems to be a second structure with a different orientation—roughly north–south on its long axis.

In addition to various computer manipulations of the data, the results of the geophysical prospection must be considered in the context of the archaeological materials, geomorphological observations, and other sources of information about these locations before any confident conclusions are possible. Nevertheless, we believe that the geophysical results will enhance our understanding of each of these archaeological landscapes.

5. LOCA study

A number of sites ("LOCA" in EKAS terminology) were revisited and further documentation completed.

6. Isthmia Museum study

The small collection of representative material removed from the field by permission of the Eforeia was further documented through photography and drawing.

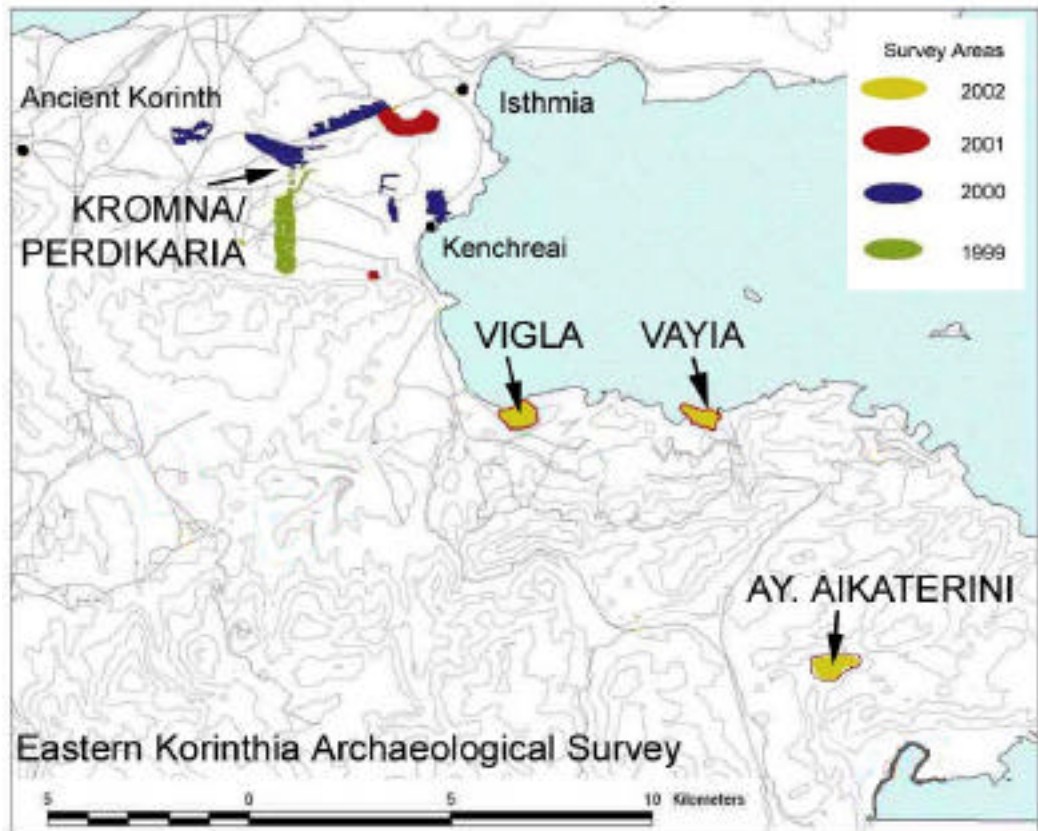


Figure 1. Areas investigated by the Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey, 1999-2002.

VAGIA / ΒΑΓΙΑ

Early Bronze Age

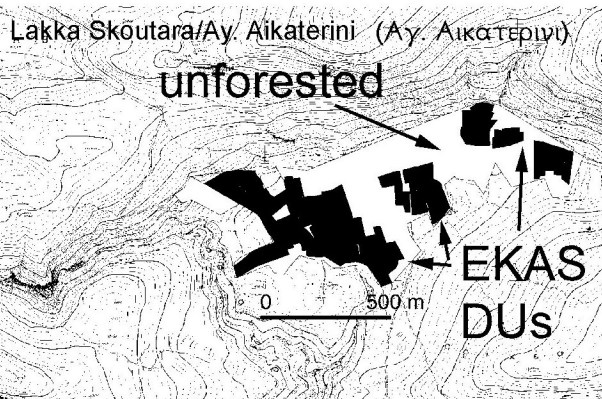
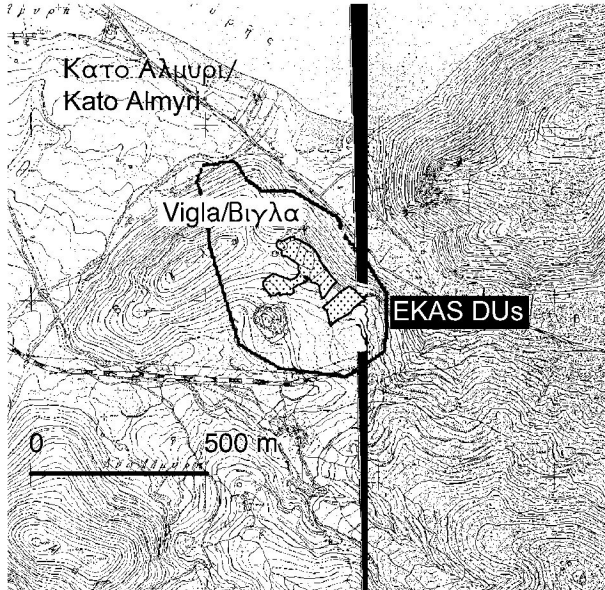
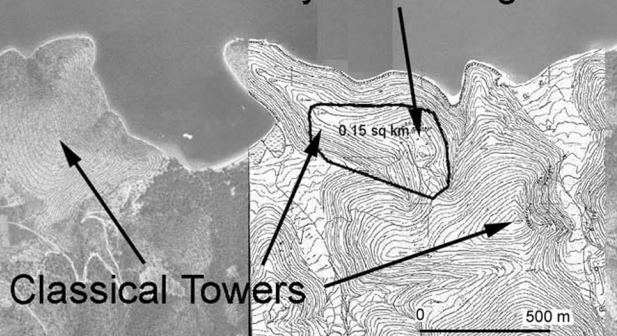


Figure 2. EKAS 2002 areas

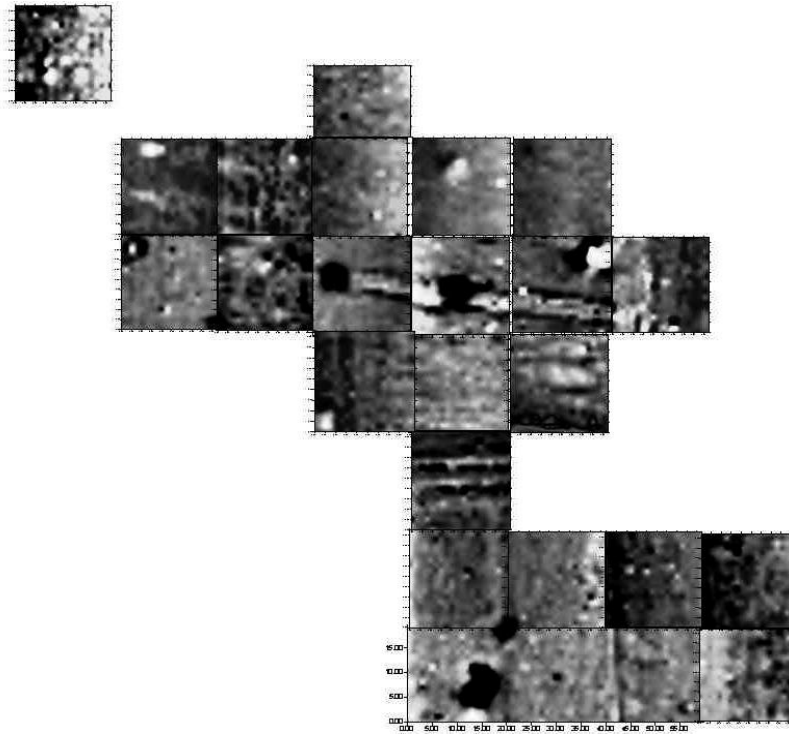


Figure 3. Magnetic Survey, Kromna "sanctuary" area.

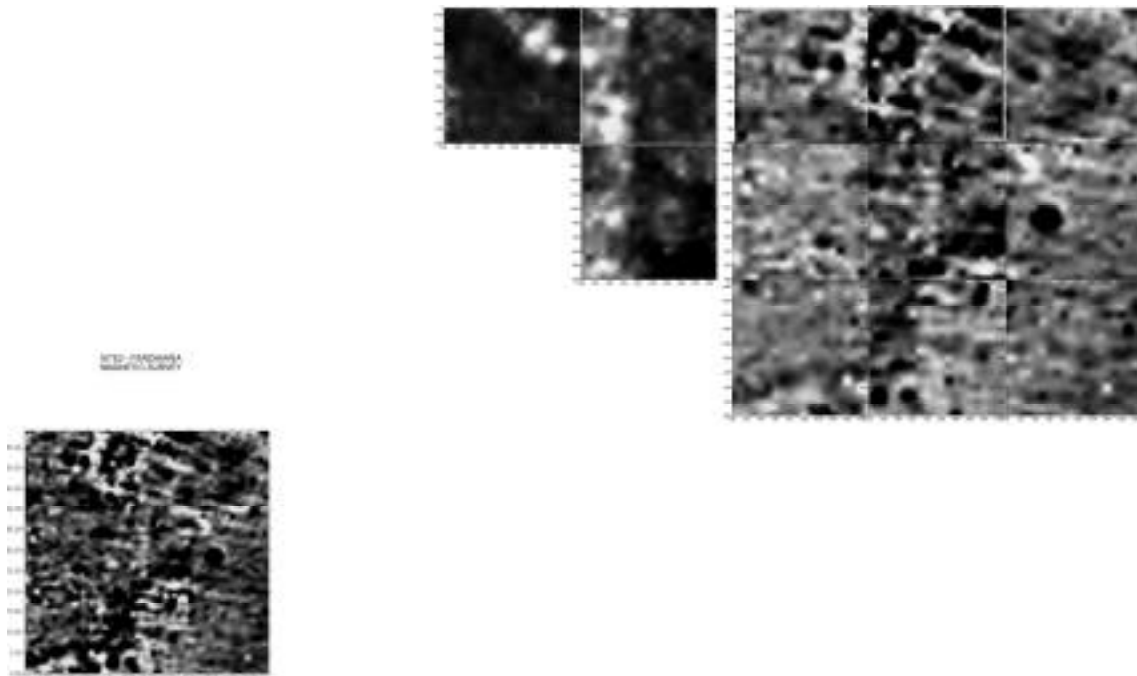


Figure 4. Magnetic survey, Perdikaria area.