

PRESS RELEASE

Images

- 1) Lambayanna beach, in the Bay of Kiladha (Argolid)
- 2) Surveying the submerged settlement
- 3) Paved surface in the submerged settlement
- 4) Stone foundations of the fortification wall
- 5) 3D view of the fortification wall (1), leading to one of the horseshoe structures (image by Achraf El Kashef)

Text

A large submerged settlement of the 3rd millennium BCE was discovered in the course of a joint research program between the University of Geneva, under the aegis of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece, and the Greek Service of Underwater Antiquities, in the Bay of Kiladha (Argolid).

This research program (the Bay of Kiladha project) was launched in 2014, along with the University of Geneva Terra Submersa expedition (which included the solar-powered boat PlanetSolar), in the vicinity of the prehistoric site of Franchthi Cave. It is under the responsibility of the director of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece, Prof. Karl Reber, and the director of the Greek Service of Underwater Antiquities, Dr. Angeliki Simosi. Fieldwork is led by Dr. Julien Beck, on behalf of the University of Geneva, and Despina Koutsoumba, on behalf of the Greek Service of Underwater Antiquities.

The Bay of Kiladha project aims at finding traces of prehistoric human activity off the eastern coast of the Argolic Gulf. The 2015 research season began on the 13th of July and focused first on Lambayanna beach, where possible remains of a prehistoric settlement were found during the 2014 season.

Intensive survey at Lambayanna revealed a sizeable (at least 1,2 hectares) fortified coastal settlement at a depth of 1-3 meters. Buildings with characteristic shapes for the Early Bronze Age (orthogonal, circular and apsidal), as well as paved surfaces (possibly streets) were found.

Parts of the outer fortification wall were discovered, as well as at least three massive (18x10 meter) horseshoe-shaped stone foundations linked to it (towers?). The pottery collected during the survey is typical of the Early Helladic II period (mid third millennium BCE), as are the stone tools, obsidian blades, and other finds.

Further investigation at Lambayanna will shed new light on a dense network of Early Bronze Age coastal settlements in the Argolic Gulf (Lerna, Tiryns, Asine), and help to better understand occupation, trade, and maritime activity in prehistory.

The 2015 season continues until August 14, with piston coring and geoaoustic modeling of the sea floor off Franchthi Cave in the Bay of Kiladha, in search of a Neolithic village. Public outreach activities are being held throughout the season as an integral part of the research project.