

THE PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT AT HERAION OF SAMOS (SACRED ROAD)

DAI Standort Abteilung Athen

Laufzeit 2009 - 2020

METADATEN



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Laufzeit 2009 - 2020

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Projekt-ID 2668

Permalink <https://www.dainst.org/projekt/-/project-display/247819>



OVERVIEW

Recent excavations North of the Sacred Road, conducted by the University of Cyprus, testified the earliest settlement core dating in the Middle-Late Chalcolithic (4500-3000 BC) and the EB I-

II early (3000-2750 BC). Besides, the existence of a strongly fortified Middle Bronze Age settlement (2000-1750 BC) was discovered for the first time, which had cultural contacts to Western Anatolian, the Cyclades, Mainland Greece and the Old Palaces of Minoan Crete.

Heraion of Samos was one of the most glorious sanctuaries of Ionia. Excavations of the German Archaeological Institute uncovered impressive buildings and votives from the Protogeometric through the Late Roman Periods (1050 BC-400 AD). Architecture discovered in the area of the Hera Temple (1953, 1955, 1957-1963) indicate the existence of a big settlement, which in the mature Early Bronze Age (2550-2000 BC) was besides Troy, Liman Tepe and the island settlements of Poliochni on Lemnos, Thermi on Lesbos and Emporio on Chios one of the earliest and biggest Aegean urban settlements.

The project was planned as a 5-years excavation of the University of Cyprus directed by Prof. Dr. Ourania Kouka. It included excavations north of the Sacred Road of Heraion and was conducted within the framework of the excavations of the German Archaeological Institute and thanks to the permit of the Greek Ministry of Culture.

The excavations testified the erection of the settlement in the Chalcolithic (4500-3000 BC) and impressive house architecture and part of a communal building dating in the so far unknown Early Bronze Age I-early II (architectural Phases Heraion 5-1: 3000-2550 BC). These finds represent the earliest settlement core of Prehistoric Heraion North of the Sacred Road, which was fortified (excavation 1981) and from which the extensive urban settlement of the last part of the Early Bronze Age emerged and extended up to the Temple area. Moreover, a part of the Early Bronze Age III fortification wall (2200-2000 BC) was discovered, that marks the limit of the settlement towards East.

Besides, three phases of impressive fortification walls and house architecture testified for the first time the existence of a flourishing Middle Bronze Age settlement (Phases MB 6-1) (2000-1750 BC) with connections to Western Anatolian coast, the Cyclades, Mainland Greece and the Old Palaces of Minoan Crete. The Middle Bronze Age settlement at Heraion with strong contacts to the Minoan palaces can be characterized as the missing link between the early urban settlement of the Early Bronze Age and the Late Bronze Age cult place for fertility, which

was testified 2009 by the German Archaeological Institute in the area of the Altar of the Heraion.

SPACE & TIME

RESEARCH

The project of the 'Prehistoric Heraion' includes both archaeological fieldwork and applications of interdisciplinary methods:



Heraion is located on the southern coast of the island of Samos, in the biggest, most fruitful, and best-watered plain of the island, which was the only micro-region suitable for habitation from the Neolithic Period through the Late Antiquity. Prehistoric habitation on Samos goes back to the Late and Final Neolithic (LN, FN) as stratified levels at the promontory of Kastro-Tigani, 7 km east of Heraion, demonstrate. Stratified Early Bronze Age (EB) habitation has been documented at Kastro-Tigani and at Heraion. The Middle (MB) and the Late Bronze Ages (LB) are known through stray finds at Heraion, Fanari and Mesokampos and through late Mycenaean chamber tombs at Heraion and Myloi.



The main goals of the project can be summarized as follows: a) to investigate the possible existence of the Neolithic-Chalcolithic, the early phases of the Early Bronze, the Middle and Late Bronze Age settlement phases, b) to examine the spatial distribution of economic activities through all phases, c) to study the external contacts of these settlements, d) to diagnose the political and social organization and their changes through time, e) to illuminate early urbanism process in the Early and the Middle Bronze Age, and f) to testify the participation and the specific role of Samos in local and extensive trade networks not only

within the Aegean, but also between the Aegean and Western Anatolia, as well as between the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean including Cyprus in Prehistoric Times.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

TEAM



RESULTS

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