

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON
**CITY PORTS
FROM THE AEGEAN
TO THE BLACK SEA**
MEDIEVAL - MODERN NETWORKS

22nd -29th August 2015



EDITORS

FLORA KARAGIANNI - UFUK KOCABAŞ



ege

YAYINLARI

E G E Y A Y I N L A R I

Proceedings of the Symposium on City Ports from the Aegean to the Black Sea. Medieval - Modern Networks

22nd -29th August 2015

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PROJECT PARTICIPANTS



European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments
Leophoros Stratou 2, 54640, Thessaloniki
GREECE
www.ekbmm.gr



Istanbul University, Faculty of Letters Department of Conservation of Marine Archaeological Objects.
Ordu Cad. 34459 Laleli Fatih, Istanbul
TURKEY
www.istanbul.edu.tr



Municipality of Kavala
Kyprou 10, 65403 Kavala
GREECE



Museum for National History and Archaeology Constanta
Ovidiu Square no. 12, 900745 Constanta
ROMANIA
www.minac.ro



Odessa City Council, Department of Culture and Tourism
Ekaterininskaya 14, 65026 Odessa
UKRAINE



The George Chubinashvili National Research Centre
5, Tabukashvili St. 0105, Tbilisi
GEORGIA
www.gch-centre.ge



Municipality of Varna
43 "Osni Primorski polk" Blvd, 9000 Varna
BULGARIA



Koc University College of Social Sciences and Humanities Department of Archaeology and History of Art
Rumelifeneri Yolu 34450 Sarıyer Istanbul
TURKEY
<http://cssh.ku.edu.tr/arha/home>

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Sustainable Cultural Routes in Istanbul: The Küçükalyalı Arkeopark and Its Vicinities¹

ALESSANDRA RICCI, BARIŞ ALTAN

ABSTRACT

The Küçükalyalı ArkeoPark is an urban archaeology project located on the Asian side of Istanbul's Greater Municipality. Although the ArkeoPark covers a relatively medium-sized area corresponding to some 4,500/5,000 sq. m, it represents the largest surviving archaeological area on the Asian side of Istanbul. Investigations at the site and research currently support identification of the remains with the Middle Byzantine period monastic complex built by patriarch Ignatios between 867 and 877 CE. Ongoing excavations are bringing to light the second half of the ninth-century ecclesiastical building that has survived above

a cistern, as well as traces of settlement spanning the first half of the fourteenth century.

The Küçükalyalı ArkeoPark is a project focusing on archaeological inquiry as well as on public engagement. Within the scope of its public engagement activities, a specific element will be presented here: work carried out within the EU LIMEN project aimed at devising more sustainable visitor activities for the site. A suburban cultural route linking the site with the nearby archipelago of the Princes' Islands and the establishment of a bike route represent the focus of this contribution.

The Küçükyalı ArkeoPark: its surroundings and archaeology

While work currently carried out at the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark covers a broad variety of activities—ranging from excavation, study and conservation of the finds to cultural programs and educational activities aimed at fostering public archaeology—this presentation will focus on a particular theme. Specifically, we wish to present work carried out thus far within the framework of the EU LIMEN project and aimed at determining whether the creation of a cultural route including the Küçükyalı Arkeo-Park would be beneficial to the enhancement of visitation to the site in the short and long term.

The Küçükyalı ArkeoPark covers a medium-sized (ca. 4,500/5,000 sq. m) archaeological and natural space tucked in between modern buildings in the Çınar neighborhood, district of Küçükyalı, Municipality of Maltepe, on the Asian side of Istanbul's Greater Municipality (*Fig. 1*). Several of the local inhabitants recall a time, just several decades ago, when the neighborhood was less developed and the physical landscape surrounding the archaeological area appeared greener and

displayed few urban features. In antiquity, however, the ancient remains were much closer to the sea of Marmara, within close visual range of the Princes' Islands, and were part of the extended physical landscape forming Byzantine Constantinople's hinterland. Today Küçükyalı is a tranquil yet densely populated neighborhood, part of Istanbul's greater metropolitan area, and treasuring the largest surviving archaeological space in the city's Asian side. In antiquity the remains forming the complex at Küçükyalı extended well beyond the current boundaries of the ArkeoPark and likely engaged with a surrounding network of suburban residences, agricultural estates, roads, cemeteries, small harbors and more. These suburban qualities continued well into the Ottoman and Early Republican periods, until a few decades ago, when this area became an integral part of Istanbul's urban landscape ².

Archaeological investigations and research are providing new data for the identification of the site. The complex at Küçükyalı is currently identified as a large-sized and monumental suburban monastery built in the Middle Byzantine period. The monastery, a place of isolation, solitude and contempla-

tion, was designed and built during the second half of the ninth century at the will of a prominent figure of the Middle Byzantine period: the patriarch Ignatios, son of the deposed emperor Michael the First Rangabes (r. 811–813 CE), who after his father's dethronement was evirated and exiled to the Princes' Islands, where he became a monk. From the Princes' Islands Ignatios ascended to the patriarchal seat twice, and the hagiographical text composed by David Niketas Paphlago implies that he built the monastery during his second tenure as patriarch ³. Ignatios likely spent time at the monastery and, according to the same hagiographical text, was also buried there in a small chapel added to the southeast of the monastic church in 867 CE⁴. We know that the church was dedicated to St. Michael and that the monastery took the name of *Satyros*, or *Anatellon* (or, The Rising One).

In the late Byzantine period, the complex maintained some forms of life, which came to a rather sudden end around the middle of the fourteenth century when Ottoman troops took over this region. However, no traces of violent conflict have thus far been detected in the area. Furthermore, archaeological inves-

tigations at the site have not yet detected evidence of Ottoman period occupation⁵.

The surviving remains at the site center around a rectangular-in-plan platform that was created in antiquity by means of massive earth removal and on a slightly southward-sloping terrain, with large, monumental and buttressed retaining walls built to support the platform⁶. The earth fill and the monumental retaining walls are still visible. The lower level of the platform, completely underground in antiquity, was occupied in part by a cistern (*Fig. 2*). The western and larger portion of the cistern was originally covered by four rows of parallel brick domes, for a total of twenty-eight domes resting either on piers or columns and that must have collapsed long ago⁷. As a result of the collapse, the cistern's floor was filled by some 2.5/3 m. of earth and debris, leaving this portion of the cistern as an open-air space that is now entirely green. Some of the cultural activities run by the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark take place in this scenic setting. The eastern portion of the cistern, smaller in size than its western counterpart, conserves its original roofing system, dominated at the center by a monumental brick dome resting on four massive stone and

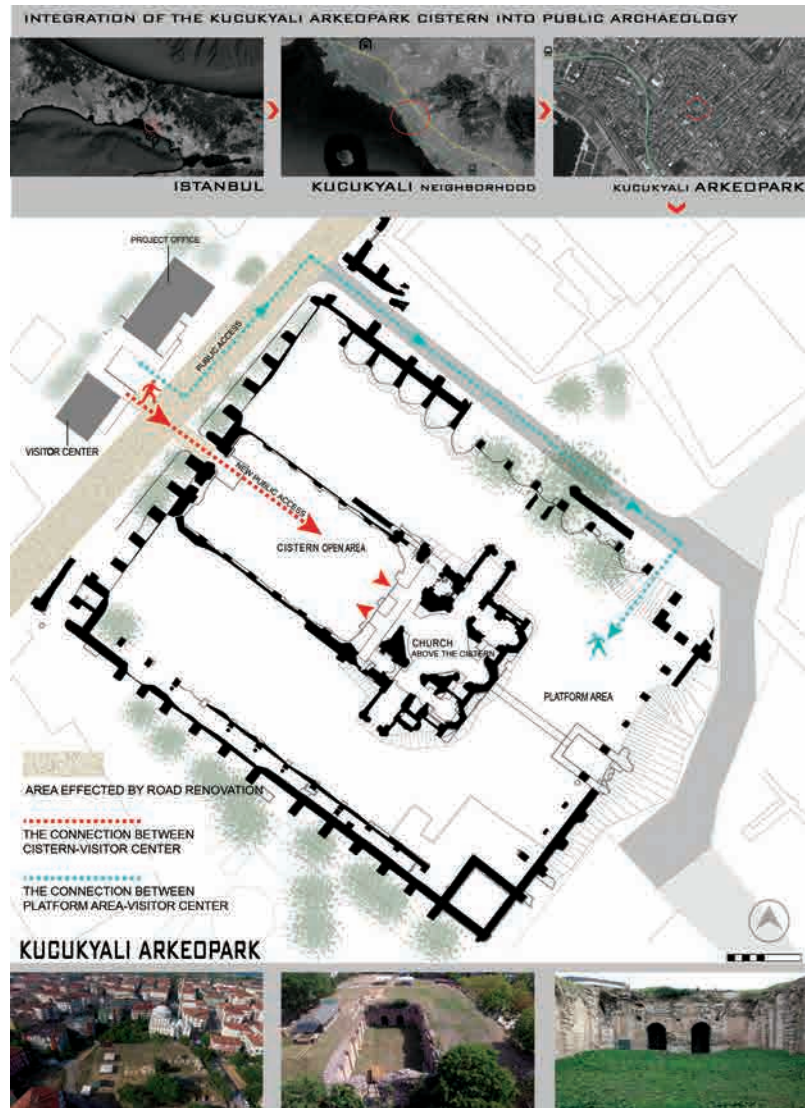


Fig 1. General plan of the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark with indication of public access to the site (S. Tunali for KYAP 2015)

Fig 2. The cistern at the
Küçükalyalı ArkeoPark
(KYAP 2015)

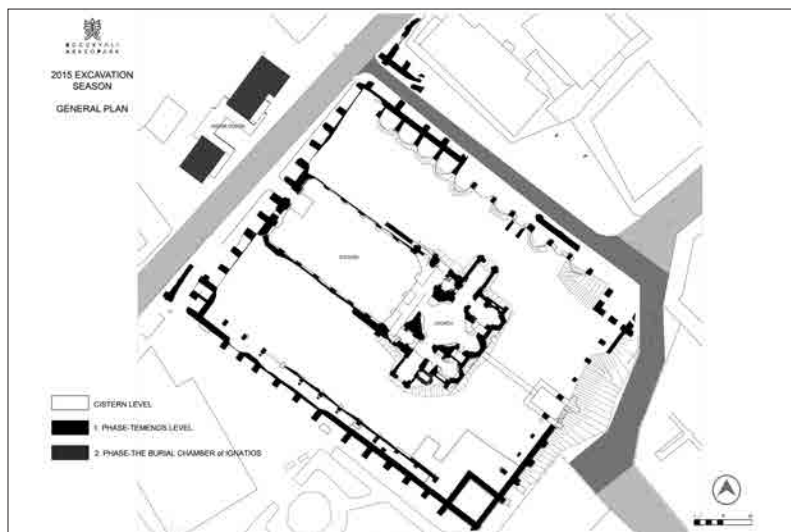
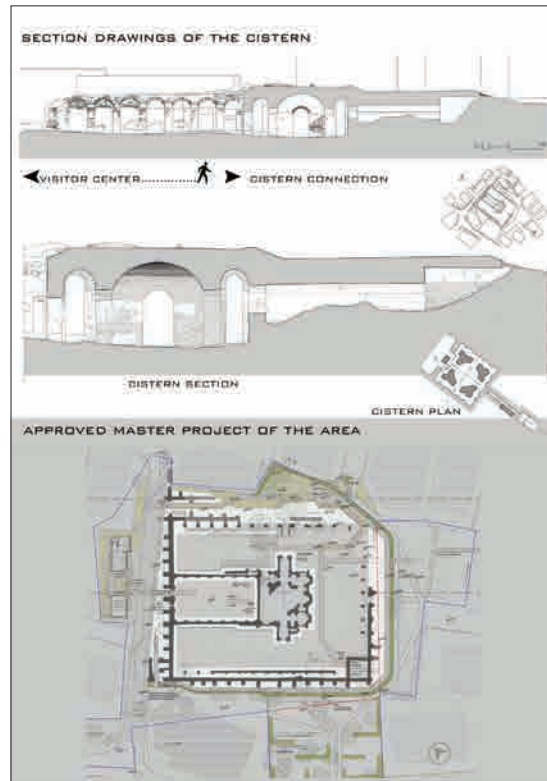


Fig 3. General plan of the Byzantine period architectural
features at the Küçükalyalı ArkeoPark (KYAP 2015)

brick piers. Lateral corridors frame the dome into a square and are marked by barrel vaults and groin vaults at the corners. Once in this space visitors may also observe the feeding channel that brought water, most likely from the area of Samandıra (ancient Byzantine period *Damatrys*). Samandıra is located on a plateau where ancient water springs and water channels have been identified. The cistern is firmly impressed in the memory of generations of Küçükalyalı's inhabitants as a mysterious cave replete with tunnels and other fantastic sights. A "real" inhabitant of Küçükalyalı usually refers to the cistern as the *mağra* in Turkish, or the cave⁸.

A newly completed walkway through the northern area of the platform provides views of the ancient extension of the complex to the north of the platform (Fig. 3). This is a reminder of the fact that the complex extended well beyond the platform, particularly on its northern, western and southern sides. On the northern side, remains of building foundations have been excavated in part. The newly discovered walls show connections to the platform's retaining walls and similar building techniques. The walkway is pleasantly framed within the ancient remains, and three monumental, historic mas-

tic trees form a small recreational space for local inhabitants and visitors. Remains of the ancient access ramp leading up to the platform from the north were excavated during the 2010 season. The ramp leans against the platform's walls, which on this side may have been marked by a long arcade, or arcaded portico.

Once on the platform, it is possible to observe the remains of a church above the uncollapsed eastern portion of the cistern. Though preserved only to a maximum height of 1.20 m. from the floor level, the church is currently being excavated and reveals walls built of solid brick and mortar. There also appears to be a physical correlation between the cistern and the church, thus supporting a hypothesis that the two architectural features were built concurrently. The church preserves faint traces of its narthex, excavated during the 2014 season. This discovery determined the length of the building at 29.5 m, while its north-south axis extends over circa 21 m. The ecclesiastical building presents three apses, with a central dome resting on four massive piers forming an octagonal central space. The likelihood is strong indeed that the church at Küçükalyi is representative of the cross-domed build-



Fig 4. The funerary chapel unearthed at the southeastern corner of the church (KYAP 2002)



Fig 5. Aerial view of the Küçükalyi ArkeoPark from the east during the 2015 excavation season (KYAP 2015)

ings with side compartments and a compact square plan that matured during the iconoclastic period. Architectural details and the decoration of the building point to a dating in the second half of the ninth century. Archaeology confirmed the use of the site through the first decades of the fourteenth century, with hardly any major architectural interventions after the ninth century⁹. At the southeastern side of the church, archaeological investigations brought to light the remains of a funerary chapel (Fig. 4), which was likely to have been

Fig 6. Mock excavation for elementary school children on the site's platform (KYAP 2015)



Fig 7. One of the artisanal markets carried out within the EU LIMEN project inside the Byzantine period cistern (KYAP 2014)

added not long after completion of the church. Its location appears to match the description provided by the hagiographical text, which mentions the location of patriarch Ignatios' burial¹⁰.

Even if other parts of the monastery have not survived, its cistern, the platform with the church and the likely monastic tower revealed by excavations on the southeastern corner of the platform provide us with a rare set of information about monastic life and architecture for Byzantine Constantinople and its vicinity (Fig. 5).

A Sustainable Urban ArkeoPark

The Küçükaly ArkeoPark is a project focusing on archaeological inquiry as well as on public engagement. This means that the results of archaeological research are shared with the local community and other interested parties. Excavations take place on a yearly basis for a period of about two or three months and are followed by study, conservation and publication of the finds. An interdisciplinary team of specialists, students and volunteers works on these delicate activities.

While archaeological work at Küçükaly progresses, the

ArkeoPark Project also emphasizes public engagement¹¹. Through educational activities, a children's club and a wide range of on site cultural events—ranging from free guided tours of the site to open-air concerts and movie screenings the ArkeoPark shares its archaeological discoveries while also fostering learning and stewardship (*Fig. 6*). The Küçükyalı ArkeoPark Project encapsulates a small yet important piece of Istanbul's heritage, in which the green space, its ecology and the archaeological remains balance nature and history. Our Project aims at better understanding, preserving and representing this balance in a long-lasting way while making the space available to the local community and outside visitors (*Fig. 7*).

Sustainable Cultural Routes

Presently, the site of Küçükyalı is located at a distance of circa 700 m. from the modern seashore, but it was at least 250 m. further inland as recently as the 1960s. As some photographs and descriptions of the period indicate, the site at that point had sandy beaches dotted by rocks and ancient remains. However, the current built environment precludes observation of the complex in its broader setting, and the presence of the sea

is hardly noticeable today. Yet a view from the top of the minaret of Çınar Camii reveals the proximity of the islands forming the archipelago of the Princes' Islands: *Proti* (modern Kınalıada) and *Halki* (modern Heybeliada) at close visual range, with the larger masses of *Prinkipos* (modern Büyükkada) to the south. It is on these islands that Ignatios as well as his father, the deposed emperor Michael the First Rangabes, and his family were scattered in different monasteries and on different islands. Hence, there appears to be a historical link between the islands and the site at Küçükyalı.

At present, the Princes' Islands represent together with the Bosphorus one of the two main tourist attractions outside the historic peninsula. The islands offer an oasis of silence and nature as all motorized vehicles are banned along with the construction of tall buildings. Horse-drawn carriages and bicycles represent the main mode of transportation, while wooden Victorian-style cottages and summer residences line the islands' streets.

Although there appears to be a rising demand for cultural tourism in the city of Istanbul, it is important to stress that mass and cultural tourism are gener-

ally confined to specific areas in the Historic Peninsula and in the Beyoğlu region. Data recently published by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism might help visualize the areas of "tourism concentration." The Sultanahmet area appears to concentrate the highest numbers of visitors—the Topkapı Palace Museum with 3,400,000 visitors and the Hagia Sophia Museum with 3,275,000 visitors—while the Beyoğlu region and the Princes' Islands fall behind with much smaller numbers. The average length of stay in Istanbul for the year 2014 was 4.13 days for domestic tourists and 1.88 days for foreign tourists¹² (Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism).

The location of the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark provides us with a variety of options to create cultural routes for Istanbul. It is possible to draw the attention of local and foreign visitors who look for alternative cultural destinations to the Asian side of Istanbul and to develop the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark as a focal point for a variety of cultural routes¹³.

Within the framework of the LIMEN Project at the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark, we organized two meetings (October 10, 2014, and February 28, 2014) on sustainable cultural routes for the

ArkeoPark and its vicinities¹⁴ (Cultural Route Meetings). This was with the purpose of coordinating with the Cultural Routes Society—a legal body based in Antalya linked to the Society of European Cultural Routes and working predominantly on rural cultural routes—in order to develop a vision for urban and near-urban cultural routes in Istanbul¹⁵ (Cultural Routes Society). Four main questions were addressed during the meetings:

- Can we encourage visitors to seek alternative cultural routes in the city of Istanbul?
- Are there significant numbers of visitors in Istanbul who are seeking alternative cultural routes?

- How important are numbers when considering sustainability in cultural tourism?
- Can a single monument such as the complex at Küçükyalı draw visitors' attention and become part of a cultural route?

During the first meeting held at the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark on October 10, 2014, we focused on the potential for creating urban and rural cultural routes. In the second meeting, held on February 28, 2015, in collaboration with the Princes' Islands City Council, we collectively defined three cultural routes for Istanbul and its vicinities.

1) Istanbul Urban Route (a zigzag along Istanbul's Land

Walls and upper areas of the Golden Horn).

2) Vicinities of Istanbul:

Asian Side and Islands (including the archaeological site at Küçükyalı, the bike road linking the site to the seashore and the Princes' Islands. Possible future additions may include the archaeological areas at Dragos, Samandıra and Aydos [Fig. 8]).

3) Vicinities of Istanbul:

European Side (focusing on the Anastasian Long Walls and the aqueducts in the vicinities of Çatalca).

Alternative Sustainable Cultural Routes for Istanbul Focusing on the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark

The newly built public transport infrastructure, including the Marmaray (a rail transportation project under the Bosphorus strait along the Sea of Marmara going from Halkalı on the European side to Gebze on the Asian side) and the Kadıköy–Kartal metro line, makes the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark much easier to reach by public transportation. We strongly believe that within a megapolis the size of Istanbul, public transportation can be one of the main means of movement for tourists as well as residents. Public transportation helps visitors save time, allows

Fig 8 Plan of the proposed "Vicinity of Istanbul: Asian Side and Islands" cultural route (KYAP 2015)



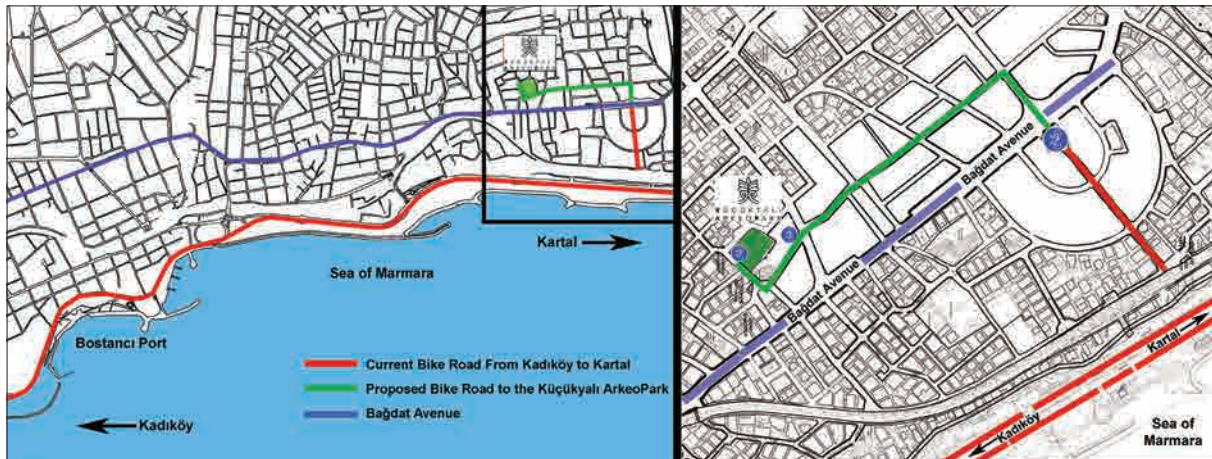


Fig 9. Plan of the approved bike route (KYAP 2015)

a more direct and hands-on experience with the city and is a more environmentally sustainable form of movement than automobiles or buses. The “Vicinities of Istanbul: Asian Side and Islands” route adds public sea transport as another appealing means of transport for visitors and tourists¹⁶.

As mentioned above, it is now much faster and easier to reach the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark via public transportation. The Küçükyalı station on the Kadıköy–Kartal metro line is located only about 10 minutes walking distance from the site. One of the two main sea hubs on the Asian side of Istanbul, the Bostancı port, is within walking distance of the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark.

Bicycles represent a sustainable and environmentally friend-

ly form of transportation. In the city of Istanbul, urban bike lanes have greatly increased over the past years. Within the framework of the LIMEN Project, a bike lane will be implemented in order to re-establish the association of the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark with the nearby shore of the Sea of Marmara. This bike lane will

Fig 10. Meeting at the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark for public presentation and discussion of the bike route (KYAP 2015)



originate from the existing bike lane on the Marmara shore, connecting Kadıköy to Kartal, and will represent an important component of the sustainable cultural tourism route for the Asian side of Istanbul.

In order to assess the feasibility of such a bike route, we launched a “bike night” event at the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark. On the warm summer evening of August 12, 2015, we hosted a gathering for the neighborhood and cyclists on the Byzantine period platform at the archaeological site (*Fig. 9*). At the meeting we presented, discussed and received constructive feedback on the bike lane project. At the same time a group of volunteers provided the audience with training and advice on how to use urban bike lanes in the city of Istanbul. The meeting proved successful and, with the support of the local Maltepe municipality, the bike lane project was finalized (*Fig. 10*). At the time of writing this contribution, the new bike lane was in the process of receiving final approval from the Istanbul Greater Municipality¹⁷.

Site Management Plan and Cultural Routes

A group of experts from different fields have been working on drafting a Site Management

Plan (SMP) since October 2014 within the framework of an ISTKA (Istanbul Development Agency) grant, “A Sustainable Urban Archaeology Experience: The Küçükyalı ArkeoPark.” Prof. Nuran Zeren Gülersoy and her team worked in collaboration and dialogue with the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark team. The boundaries of the SMP were approved by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism in February 2015. Subsequently, the director of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums, Zeynep S. Kızıltan, was officially appointed as the Site Manager by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in August 2015. The preliminary draft of the SMP was handed to the Ministry in September 2015¹⁸.

One of the main components of the SMP is the creation and implementation of sustainable cultural routes that will include the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark.

Conclusions

Our research and preliminary implementation indicates that the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark has potential to become a core point for a sustainable cultural route, one that should include the Princes’ Islands in order to add meaningful historical value to the visitor experience. At the same time, the ecology of the

sites will be enhanced by the usage of environmentally friendly forms of movement such as urban bike lanes and public transportation inclusive of sea transportation. We also feel that public archaeology activities carried out at the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark together with the newly completed Visitors’ and Community Center represent an added value for visitors. Moreover, the local community at Küçükyalı will continue to play an important role in stewardship of the site. The success of the cultural route will also be enhanced by stewardship under the auspices of the local authorities and the local Maltepe municipality.

NOTES

- 1 Activities at the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark are carried out through permission granted by the General Directorate for Antiquities and Monuments of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Ms. Zeynep S. Kızıltan, Director of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums, is in charge of operations, with Dr. Alessandra Ricci serving as the scientific coordinator. The authors wish to thank the General Directorate for permission to carry out work at the site; Ms. Kızıltan and her staff, including Ms. Asuman Denker among others; Prof. Dr. İrşadi Aksun at the VPDR Office at Koç University, for his unconditional support of the EU LIMEN project; and Ms. Meltem Işanlar for her indefatigable contribution to our work. Last but not least, sincere thanks go to the entire team of the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark project.
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