

A documented trade corridor near Wadi Mineh suggests that the site functioned as a temporary stopping place for traders during the Early Imperial period. I argue that the Qobustan inscription, too, may have been carved by a private trader, perhaps waiting in the nearby rock shelters either for trade partners to appear or for unfavorable circumstances to pass. Because the Qobustan inscription was carved by a Roman centurion, it may be the personal epigraphic statement of one formerly based near the eastern *limes* and who ventured into unfamiliar territories to engage in private enterprise. If so, it constitutes rare evidence documenting the activities of private Roman individuals beyond the borders of the empire. It also removes one of the few indications that the first-century emperors, and in particular Domitian, aspired to military conquest in the Caucasus region, suggesting the need to reevaluate that scenario.

## SESSION 4H: Colloquium

### Current Research at Nemea: New Finds and New Insights

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#### Colloquium Overview Statement

This colloquium presents current archaeological work at the site of the Sanctuary of Nemean Zeus in Greece. The papers of the session span the chronological range of the site, from prehistory to the Byzantine period, showcase the work of established scholars, highlight the involvement of younger scholars and graduate students, and spotlight lesser-known materials and aspects of the site itself.

The six papers begin with a field report from the 2011 excavations at Nemea with their focus on the earlier phases of human use and manipulation of the area, investigating the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age and the emergence of the ritual area. This examination of the early phases of the sanctuary continue, in the second paper, which discusses the ritual and cultural implications of the visible manipulation of landscape for the archaic heroon and its associated embankment relative to the Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Early Archaic strata that underlie them.

The approach of the third paper combines the scientific and humanistic analyses of Late Classical/Hellenistic pottery from the excavations. The identification of wares and provenances permit the author to suggest reconstructions of the components of the regional vs. international outlook of the sanctuary at the height of its built environment.

The last three papers focus on aspects of the later habitation of the site and valley. Of these, two use finds from the Nemea Valley Archaeology Project. The first transitions from the earlier to later material by addressing changing land use in the valley from the Archaic to Roman periods. Fluctuations in the intensity of land exploitation over time and the suitability of Nemea for nonsubsistence polyculture are examined using intensive pottery study and GIS. The second compares the medieval material from the survey to that of the site to create a medieval overview and reveals substantial domestic and agricultural use of the sanctuary area

and stadium in the 12th and 13th centuries C.E. that highlights changing land use and human activities within the Nemean landscape. The final paper compares the skeletal material from the Early Christian and Byzantine periods; although living conditions appear similar from one period to the other, changes in burial deposition suggest a changing composition in the population.

By emphasizing new methodologies or by focusing on lesser-known periods at, or objects from, the site, this session enriches understanding of the development of the area of the Sanctuary of Nemean Zeus and its relationship to the surrounding valley.

#### Excavations at Nemea: The 2011 Season

*Kim Shelton*, University of California, Berkeley

This paper presents the preliminary results of the second season of renewed exploration and excavation of the Sanctuary of Zeus at Nemea and its vicinity by the University of California, Berkeley, under the auspices of The American School of Classical Studies at Athens. The focus of the new excavations is the early history and prehistory of Nemea, especially in the area of the Sanctuary of Zeus. The research goal is to investigate the process of transition in the area of the later sanctuary from border region between two emerging political powers to a ritual center that became a focus for pan-Hellenic national and ethnic identity; a change that the area exhibits as it moves from the prehistoric period into the early historical one.

Several areas of the site are investigated through excavation this season, as well as part of the Tsoungiza Hill, location of successive prehistoric habitations. Some trenches, such as those in the Hero Shrine, continue the investigation of features uncovered last season. Other areas to the southwest of the temple, in the heart of the sanctuary and east of the altar, delve deeper into the early history of the site. A few trenches also investigate the stratigraphic sequence of the sanctuary's use. Initial results both confirm and supplement information gained through the renewed excavation program and the ongoing ceramic study from past excavation. Preliminary results of the 2011 season are discussed.

#### The Archaic Heroon and Nemean Landscapes

*Nathan Arrington*, Princeton University

The construction of the heroon at ancient Nemea was a crucial component in the development of the Archaic pan-Hellenic sanctuary. The low mound marked the alleged grave for Opheltes, in whose honor the original games were said to be held. Moreover, the heroon, together with the embankment emerging from it, extended over 100 m, and accordingly this (joint) monument required a significant amount of labor and altered the landscape of the valley.

This paper investigates how the heroon and the embankment both responded to and shaped the visible past and the natural landscape within the political and cultural contexts of the Archaic period. It analyzes the relationship of the Archaic monuments to the underlying Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Early Archaic levels, and explores the cultural and ritual significance of the wide spectrum of sediments and matrices within the monuments.