

"Local" Ceramics from the Houses at Nemea in the Late Fourth–Early Third Centuries B.C.E.: Preliminary Results

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The ongoing study of ceramics from the rebuilding period at Nemea (late fourth–early third centuries B.C.E.) aims to identify and define local and regional ceramics from the sanctuary through a program of scientific ceramic analysis. To fully understand economic activity and visitorship at the sanctuary in the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods, it is necessary to gain a greater understanding of ceramic production and provenance. The combination of typological and chronological study with petrographic and neutron activation analysis produces definitions of characteristic wares in addition to providing insight into the provenance of the ceramics. No evidence for local ceramic production at Nemea has been found to date; however, previous pottery studies indicate that the majority of pottery is local or regional in origin. The influence of Argos in the sanctuary, in addition to the roles of nearby Kleonai and Phlious, makes it likely that the ceramics from the sanctuary represent the greater economic activity and vessel production of the region, rather than a single production center. Thus, the petrographic and chemical studies endeavour to identify, define, and provenance the wares from the greater area, to understand the relationship of production and exchange in the Korinthia and Argolid during the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods.

The majority of the examined ceramics comes from several buildings found in the sanctuary and the houses. These buildings represent multiuse structures with an abundance of cooking, table, and fine wares. The array of ceramics and indications of building use provide a varied assemblage, allowing the study to center on both fine and coarsewares. Thus, the extended study of the ceramics from these domestic areas also creates a greater understanding of the functions of the buildings to help clarify the activities that took place in them.

This paper outlines this ongoing study and the preliminary results from the typological and macroscopic analysis. Additionally, the aims of the petrographic and chemical studies, to be carried out in 2012, are addressed. The study of the Hellenistic houses, combined with the program of analysis, sheds new light not only on the role of ceramic production in Nemea and the surrounding areas but also on the types of activities taking place on the site.

Nemean Neighbors: A Survey Perspective from the Nemea Valley

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Finds from the Nemea Valley Archaeological Project (NVAP) illustrate how and to what extent ancient inhabitants farmed and exploited this land-locked and often politically marginal landscape in the southwestern Corinthia. Analyzing and contextualizing survey finds from the Archaic to Late Roman periods, this paper examines diachronic change in the Nemea Valley, with particular attention given to agriculture and related rural activities. Although the relocation of the Nemean games in the third century B.C.E. diminished the area's sociopolitical importance, the continued prosperity of nearby Corinth and Argos, and a thriving regional trade in the Late Roman period, allowed the area to flourish, particularly through

nonsubsistence polyculture. Within the tracts walked by the survey, a predominance of small sherds likely to have been included in domestic waste used as fertilizer suggests that manuring was practiced during the Roman period. Numbers of rural sites peak in the Archaic, Classical, and Late Roman periods, with the last showing strong signs of villa-based agriculture. The functional variety of on-site ceramic assemblages is used as an indicator of activity, helping to distinguish cemeteries from rural shrines, and storage and processing sites from true farmsteads, which are less common among rural sites than many Greek surveys acknowledge. Bridging the gap between published results for the prehistoric and Byzantine periods, this study examines life in the backyard of Nemea and demonstrates continuity and even growth in agricultural exploitation during centuries when the sanctuary was inactive.

The Sanctuary of Zeus at Nemea: The Medieval Deposits (12th–13th Centuries C.E.)

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This paper reports on the ongoing study of the medieval deposits from the excavations at the Sanctuary of Zeus and stadium in Nemea, as part of the research and publication program of the Nemea Center for Classical Archaeology.

The excavations have produced substantial evidence for occupation from the 12th–13th centuries C.E. Farming activities were extensive; farming plots, an irrigation ditch, agricultural implements, ceramics, and coins of this period have been found throughout the area. Two domestic structures have been also uncovered. A 13th-century house located southeast of the temple was excavated in 1976. This structure consists of two rooms, along with storage pithoi and two cisterns. A second house, located immediately west of the modern Nemea River, was excavated in 1998.

The Early Christian basilica saw considerable activity, centered on a medieval chapel built over its remains. The ruined chapel was removed by French archaeologists in 1884, when systematic investigations began in the area. Excavations in 1980 revealed that the terracotta-tile paving of the basilica was covered over by medieval layers, including graves and pits. The 1984–1986 excavations produced further evidence for activity in this area, including 25 graves along the south side of the basilica.

The stadium is another area with substantial medieval deposits. Large quantities of ceramics and coins dating to the 12th and 13th centuries were recovered during the excavations of its north end, especially in section EE 25.

The systematic study of the medieval deposits from the sanctuary and the stadium provides a better understanding of the spatial distribution of this material, including farming activities, domestic structures, ceramics, and other finds. Selected deposits of coarse and fine wares are being studied to refine the chronology of well-represented styles. The excavated medieval material is then combined with the survey evidence of the Nemea Valley Archaeological Project to reconstruct land use, settlement, and other activities in the Sanctuary of Zeus and its vicinity.