

# YERONISOS ISLAND EXPEDITION

December 2009

New York University, Dept. of Classics

## Dear Friends of Yeronisos

In 2010, we mark the twentieth anniversary of the start of the Yeronisos Island Excavations in Cyprus. We thank those of you who have supported us from the beginning and all along the way, making possible the discovery of this intriguing island sanctuary of Apollo founded during the reign of Cleopatra of Egypt.

Nineteen team members traveled to Yeronisos in May and June, 2009, and excavated ten trenches in the center of the island and near the East Building. These included ten NYU undergraduates, and senior staff members from the U.S., Puerto Rico, Cyprus, Greece, Poland and the U.K.

Dr. Jolanta Mlynarczyk of the University of Warsaw continued her study of the late Hellenistic ceramics, while Dr. Mariusz Burdajewicz of the Warsaw Museum studied the hemispherical glass bowls that have been found all across the island. Richard Anderson, architect of the Agora Excavations in Athens, prepared a new site plan of the remains of an Early Byzantine basilica at the east end of Yeronisos, using a total station laser theodolite. He completed his important work on the reconstruction of East Building as the vaulted undercroft of a small Christian basilica, most of which has collapsed into the sea. Christos Tsirogiannis of Cambridge University participated in the excavations and Victoria Grinbaum of University College London began a new study of the transport amphorae that brought wine to Yeronisos from across the Aegean. Paul Croft of the University of Edinburgh's Lemba Archaeological Field Station worked with us both in the field and on the study of animal bones recovered from Yeronisos. Simon Demetropoulos, team ecologist, took students on excursions through the wilds of the Akamas Peninsula and on evening beach patrols to protect the eggs of sea turtles deposited at Lara Bay.

Director Joan Connelly presented three papers on the results of the excavations, one at the Summer Workshop of the Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute in Nicosia in late June, and two in Paris this past September. She spoke on "Hybridity and Identity on Late Ptolemaic Yeronisos," at a conference of the Centre d'Etudes Chypriotes titled *Hellenistic and Imperial Cyprus*, and on "Alexandrianism: A Twenty-First Century Perspective," at the UNESCO General Conference, *Intercultural Encounter in the Hellenized Orient*, at UNESCO's Paris headquarters.

The 2010 campaign will take place from May 15-June 19<sup>th</sup> and we hope that many of you will come out to visit us during our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary dig season and for our special celebrations on the weekend of June 5<sup>th</sup>.



Thanks to a very generous donation from James Ottaway, Jr., a new Yeronisos Island Excavation Website is being created by web master Jason Ackerman. This should be up early in the New Year, so please do watch for it on [www.yeronisos.org](http://www.yeronisos.org). Also, please send us your email addresses and those of friends that you think might enjoy receiving our web news, invitations to Yeronisos events, and updates from the field. Thank you, Jim, for making all this possible! Friends of Yeronisos will now be able to download PDF's of all our publications, including J.B. Connelly's article "Twilight of the Ptolemies: Egyptian Presence on Late Hellenistic Yeronisos," just out in *Cyprus and Egypt*, Kassianidou, Merrilees, and Michaelides.

## YERONISOS AT TWENTY! UPCOMING DATES

Join us in Celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year:

Explorers Club Party, New York City, late February/early March 2010

Dig Party, Yeronisos Island, Cyprus, Weekend of June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Yeronisos Island Excavation Symposium, NYU, late Sept./early Oct. 2010

Exhibition *Cyprus: Crossroads of Civilizations*, featuring objects found by the Yeronisos Island Excavation team, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Oct. 2010



The great find of the season was a giant ceramic *pithos* (storage vessel) mended from dozens of fragments painstakingly excavated and mended by the Yeronisos Expedition team. The *pithos* stands some 1.20m in height. It took eight students to hold the pieces together for the photograph shown at left. Such storage jars would have held oil or grain, or could have been used to collect rainwater spilling off of rooftops. Since Yeronisos has no water source, the collection of water was a top priority for those staying on the island. This *pithos* was one of several found together in a trial trench opened at the southernmost extremity of the island. We believe that this area makes up a pantry or storage space that would have serviced the series of dining rooms found just to the north. This was the setting for ritual dining by pilgrims who crossed over to Yeronisos to worship Apollo. It seems that very young boys were brought out by their families for special rites of passage experienced under the watch of the god. Further excavations are needed to define the full extent of this storage facility. Congratulations are in order to trench supervisor Russell Frelinghuysen for a job well done, and to his teammates Catherine Mastrangelo, Lauren Drew, Louise Connelly, and Exec-U-Diggers Lo-Marie O'Brien and Sal and Raquel Jimenez.



A second important find is a fragment of the mane of a stone lion's head waterspout that exactly matches the impressive spout recovered during our 1994 season, shown at left. This new discovery suggests that a building on Yeronisos once had a whole series of lion's head spouts running along the gutter of its cornice. The lions' heads would have been plastered and painted to resemble marble. The highly sculptural quality of the ferociously open mouth showing sharp teeth, the animated eyebrows, and thick mane of hair, are consistent with the expressionistic style of the first century B.C. and suggest an elaborately decorated temple building.

The Yeronisos lion's head will travel to Washington D.C. next autumn for the special exhibition, *The Island of Cyprus: Crossroads of Civilization*. We are thrilled that the Friends of Yeronisos will be able to see finds that have been discovered thanks to their generosity over the past twenty years. Stone amulets worn by the boy pilgrims who traveled out to Yeronisos, and a fine frog pendant made of carnelian and silver, will be among the other Yeronisos finds on view at the Smithsonian. We look forward to welcoming you to a special event in Washington next October. Thank you for your continued support!

Exe-U-Diggers of 2009 included Dr. Salvador and Raquel Jimenez of Puerto Rico, I., and Lo-Marie O'Brien of Los Angeles, far r., with Ambassador and Mrs. Andrew Jacovides at the Yeronisos Dig Party. Why not join us for an exciting week in the trenches in 2010? Your tax-deductible contribution of \$10,000 sustains the project and brings you an unforgettable experience.



Please help us continue our work.

Make your tax-deductible contribution to:  
 "NYU Yeronisos Island Excavations,"  
 Dept. of Art History  
 Room 303, Silver Center  
 100 Washington Square East  
 New York, New York 10003

Watch for our new website at  
[www.yeronisos.org](http://www.yeronisos.org)

Please send us your email addresses to  
 receive updates on our 2010 events:  
[joan.connelly@nyu.edu](mailto:joan.connelly@nyu.edu)