

REPORT CAMPAIGN 2003

Abstract

Eric M. Moormann and Miguel John Versluys, with contributions by Tesse D. Stek and Ellen Thiermann

The Nemrud Dag Project: third interim report

The third campaign of the Nemrud Dag Project, in 2003, primarily aimed at the protection and conservation of the four tuffite reliefs and the lion horoscope on the West Terrace. These were brought to a temporary on-site restoration laboratory, where, in the next years, they will be treated. Furthermore, the statue of Antiochos on the East Terrace was restored by partial dismantling and rebuilding, and the northern statue of the Eagle and the base were partly restored; a job to be fully completed in the next campaign. This work also resulted in some new observations concerning stone working techniques, building structure, letter marks and style of the colossi. The archaeological work furthermore consisted of documentation (SIS) and taking an inventory of remains from Nemrud Dag in the storerooms of the museum of Adiyaman. This report also contains an essay on the life and work of Theresa Goell, Nemrud Dag's main explorer in the last century.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The 2003 campaign of the Nemrud Dağ Project had two main points of interest. First, we aimed at the protection and conservation of the four tuffit dexiosis reliefs and the lion horoscope on the West Terrace by bringing these reliefs to an on-site restoration laboratory (the tuffit project, cf. section 4.1; fig. 1). In this restoration house, the reliefs will be protected from the tough weather conditions, especially the heavy snow (cf. section 2) and, in the next years, can be treated (cf. section 4.1). In order

to accomplish this work, the reliefs mentioned had to undergo pre-conservation. They then had to be lifted and transported over a road that had to be built over the existing one, to the newly built, pre-fabricated and temporary restoration



Fig. 1. The West Terrace Apollo dexiosis in the process of being lifted from its position into a truck to be transported to the restoration laboratory (photo J. Venneman).



Fig. 2. Arrow head found in the fill of the base of the northern Lion and Eagle (statues H and I) on the East Terrace (photo J. Venneman).

laboratory. Moreover, some of the limestone colossal statues on the East Terrace were (partly) treated and restored (the limestone project, cf. section 4.2). From the north slope of the East Terrace podium, 14 fallen-down blocks belonging to Eagle (H) and Lion (I) were lifted and put next to the terrace in order to be able to fully document them and to put them back sequentially on their restored base. Also, emergency measurements were undertaken on the statue of Antiochos (C).

Simultaneously, the archaeological research, which started during the first two campaigns, was continued (cf. section 3). There were a few (stray) finds while the conservation work that was undertaken prompted some interesting new observations and hypotheses. We worked on the completion of the Site Information System (SIS) and integrated our changes to the physical appearance of the site into this documentation system. Furthermore, we substantially advanced in making an inventory of the artefacts from Nemrud Dağ, mostly parts of the tuffit *dexiosis*- and ancestor reliefs, in the storerooms of the Adiyaman Museum. The campaign lasted from the 1st of June to July 30, 2003.¹

2 SITE CONDITION

On our arrival, we found the site in the same condition as we left it in last year. The snow barrage built behind the *dexiosis* reliefs and the lion horoscope on the West Terrace in order to protect these from falling down, as had happened with two of the reliefs in the winter of 2001-2002 due to the pressure from snow coming from the tumulus, proved to have functioned very well.² The inclined steel pipes of the barrage were deformed by the heavy weight of snow, but there was no new damage to the reliefs. The barrage was removed in the first week of our campaign. Due to the extreme climatological circumstances on top of Nemrud Dağ during the winter, some of the poles of the fence system had broken off. The material of the barrage has been reused for the frames for the transport of the same reliefs to the restoration house (figs. 1, 17).

We made repairs to the well functioning fence system and extended it by erecting new series of poles on the West Terrace. This system must prevent visitors from climbing onto the statues and reliefs, causing damage to the monument.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The archaeological work consisted of some finds (cf. section 3.1), the completion and up-dating of the Site Information System (cf. section 3.2), new observations and the development of new ideas on the interpretation of the monument (cf. section 3.3) and the beginning of a database of all parts of reliefs and other artefacts from the *hierothesion* that are now in various Turkish and international museums (cf. section 3.4).

It is interesting to note that the ongoing conservation and restoration projects enable archaeologists to get a better insight into the building of the monument. The partly dismantling and rebuilding of the statue of Antiochos, East Terrace (C) provided the unique opportunity to study its building structure from the inside, while emergency works on the East Terrace Herakles (G) revealed clues on the building of the colossi themselves.

3.1 Finds

Similar to the works carried out by Theresa Goell, our archaeological explorations did not yield many finds so far. This campaign, the removal of the fill of the base of the northern Eagle and Lion on the East Terrace (statues H-I) brought to light one iron arrowhead (fig. 2), whereas at the opposite side, under the north-eastern corner of the A-B statues of the animals, a ceramic sherd was found.³ Worked pieces of limestone were found in the debris and sustaining wall behind the row of statues on the East Terrace and could be partly identified as fragments of the statues themselves. These last finds were no surprise, as Antiochos' head and the fragments of Kommagene had been there for many years, the most substantial fragments being hoisted to the terrace in 2002.

a. Arrow head

Hammered iron head, well preserved and only slightly corroded.⁴ It has a lancet-shaped blade, finishing into a now turned point and having a ring at the lower side. The long pin at its end was to be inserted into a wooden shaft (fig. 2).

The turned point proves that the object has been used. Theresa Goell found an almost identical piece, and other such pieces are well known from