



## Archaeologists find earliest traces of Zeus in Arcadia

After years of exploration and digging, archaeologists have said they think they have found the 'birthplace' of Zeus - and when we mean birthplace we mean the earliest findings that mention the mythical ancient god.

David Romano, an archaeologist from the University of Pennsylvania, says he has found "evidence of a drinking party and possibly feasting" around a famous altar built on Mount Lykaion. The area is only about 22 km away from the ancient site of Olympia.

## The end of island droughts?

Water shortages on the Aegean islands may become a rare event in the future. Greek ministry officials yesterday announced plans to use desalination plants to serve up fresh water to the islands.

Thirteen islands are candidates for receiving the water with some larger islands feeding smaller ones. The cost of operating of the plants and facilities on the islands will be covered by local municipalities.

## MILOS: SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

Milos island was the winner of the DAFNE Aegean Islands Network For Sustainable Development sustainability award for 2008. The island's municipality was rewarded for its use of wind generators to desalinate water, its waste treatment and the reuse of water for irrigation. The projects were evaluated by the National Technical University of Athens. Thirty seven municipalities from 30 islands in the Aegean belong to the Dafne Network that was set up in 2005 to promote sustainable growth in the Aegean by means of alternative energy sources, support for alternative tourism, protection of the environment and cultural heritage. The network is coordinated by the Interdisciplinary Institute for Environmental Research (INIER) - a non-profit organisation for the environment and sustainable development.



# Uncovering ancient secrets beneath the surface

CHICAGO (AP) — Scholars are reconsidering what ancient Greek mathematician and inventor Archimedes knew of the concept of infinity, and archaeologists may have found a fossil brain millions of years old, thanks to new ways of looking beneath the surface of ancient objects.

Using modern X-ray and spectral imaging, researchers are uncovering two ancient manuscripts by Archimedes, who lived in Sicily in the third century B.C., Uwe Bergmann of the Stanford Synchrotron Radiation Laboratory told a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science on Sunday.

In the 1300s the texts were scraped off the parchment and written over to create a prayer book, Bergmann said. But now scholars have been able to discern the original writing of Archimedes' "The Method" and "The Stomachion," volumes that exist nowhere else.

It emerges that Archimedes was far ahead of his time, using a form of calculus and devising ways to add an infi-



nite number of sums, Bergmann said.

What is known of Archimedes' concept of infinity is likely to have to change from this, he said at a symposium on using modern methods to uncover the secrets of the past.

The document, called the Archimedes Palimpsest, came to light in 1997 when an anonymous collector purchased it at auction and sent it to the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore for study. The document was originally written in the 10th century, Bergmann

said, and no earlier copies remain.

Archimedes was a famed mathematician in his own time and is still studied today. Roman soldiers killed him when they conquered Syracuse in 212 B.C.

Paul Tafforeau of the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility in France told the session that studies of fish from the Devonian period, 350 million to 400 million years ago, have disclosed the presence of an ancient fossilized brain.

A first of its kind, Tafforeau said, the fossil brain is expected to be formally reported and described in the scientific literature within a few weeks.

Francesca Casadio of the Art Institute of Chicago reported that radiation studies have allowed scholars to differentiate three bronze storage vessels from China.

Two of the vessels were archaic, she said, while the third turned out to be a later copy.

The study determined that a wine vessel made of bronze with tin and a little lead dated to China's oldest dynasty, the Shang, who ruled between 1600 B.C. and 1050 B.C.

A grain container was cast in a copper-tin alloy with lead, and dated to the Zhou dynasty between 1045 B.C. and 771 B.C.

But the third container turned out to be a copper-zinc alloy with lead and tin, made in the 12th century A.D. in the style of the earlier containers.

"It was not necessarily done to deceive," she said, "but out of sheer appreciation for the earlier ones."

Nonetheless, the testing does help scholars know more about that they are studying without damaging the art. "For a museum, that is very important," she said.

And, Casadio added, "we learn how to protect and exhibit it so it will last another 4,000 years. We learn what was cutting edge technology 4,000 years ago."

Jen Hiller of Diamond Light Source in the United Kingdom described the use of large radiation machines built to check on jet engines to study Egyptian statues. The Egyptians would sometimes place images or other items inside a statue, she said, and now that can be revealed without breaking things open. X-ray studies of mummies have been done for years but not with the detail now available.

## Ancient Greeks and Romans used kissing to express deference, not for Valentines

Washington, February 14 (ANI): Kissing meant much more than physical attraction for the ancient Greeks and Romans, for the juicy gesture was used to express deference at the time, says an expert. Donald Lateiner, a humanities-classics professor at Ohio Wesleyan University, says that men kissed men on the cheek as a social greeting, while subjects of a king "abased" themselves by kissing the ground in front of him. While speaking at a press conference in Chicago, he said that people who wanted to curry favour with someone of higher status would "kiss up" the person's hands, shoulders, and head in that order.

He revealed that poems, novels, and all kinds of art helped him parse out the history of the kiss.

Lateiner said that many Tuscan and Roman ladies' mirror cases sported erotic scenes "from the world of myth, (or) sometimes from the world of daily life." However, on Athenian vases and Pompeian frescoes, romantic smooching is quite rare. "(Instead) there's a whole lot of sex," National Geographic quoted him as saying.

He said that that might be because artists of the era preferred to depict full bodies, and a "Hollywood close-up" of people kissing would be too small a detail to feature. Anthropologist Helen Fisher of Rutgers University highlighted the fact that over 90 percent of human societies and several animals, including chimpanzees, used kisses to express themselves.

She said that the ubiquity of the smooch supported Charles Darwin's belief that kissing was an instinct that evolved to jump-start reproduction. The two researchers presented their findings on kissing during the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.