

Interim Performance Report

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Project Title: Pleiades 3

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I am pleased to report to NEH that Phases 1 and 2 of the project work plan, as outlined in the proposal, are running ahead of schedule. Jazkarta Inc., our consultant for upgrade and enhancement of the Pleiades web application and content management system (Plone), began work in January 2016 as planned. As PI, I populated [our existing project "issue tracker"](#) with records relating to [the major deliverables of the grant](#). The entire development team joined me in [San Francisco during the early part of January](#) to plan the work and meet with users. These meetings were highly productive, and the public ones well-attended (we met with 6 existing and 15 prospective users of Pleiades).

Planning for the Plone upgrade -- a core deliverable -- has gone so well subsequently that we now anticipate actually completing and deploying the upgraded version of the site by the end of May 2016, a full 6 months ahead of schedule. The upgraded version of the code has been running on a development-and-testing server for two weeks, and we are making good progress testing and evaluating the results. Progress toward this current milestone may be tracked by interested parties against [a "deploy upgrade" milestone](#), defined in our issue tracker. This acceleration in schedule will give us more time to tune performance under real-world conditions using the latest code and fully up-to-date performance monitoring apparatus. In this regard, our investment in Jazkarta is paying dividends. We had identified our most significant risk factor as "the all-too-common discovery that one of the technical components of the software work is more complex, difficult, and costly than ... anticipated." Jazkarta's expertise with the Plone content management framework, which underpins Pleiades, has so far proved an effective antidote.

Planning for [comprehensive export capabilities](#) (phase 2) and [bulk additions script](#) (phase 4) are also well advanced. A long-time collaborator who attended our January meetings ([Bruce Hartzler](#), from the American School of Classical Studies in Athens) suggested a technical approach to managing large-scale updates and additions that would make use of the comprehensive export files via an online, distributed collaboration environment like GitHub. This idea appealed to us for both its simplicity and its likely scalability, and we have subsequently vetted it with technical staff on several other external projects interested in contributing data to Pleiades. A growing group of these individuals is working with us in [a shared code repository](#) to elaborate example JSON files and a JSONSchema for validating contributions.

Phase 1 was also proposed to have entailed the hiring, by December 2015, of an "unnamed developer" to work with the PI and Jazkarta personnel on various aspects of the project. We have submitted to NEH, and are waiting on approval of, a rebudget request that would reallocate resources to eliminate this position and, instead, issue a subaward to Duke University. The subaward would engage the assistance of Ryan Baumann, a software developer for the Duke Collaboratory for Classics Computing, who has extensive experience working with Pleiades data and more advanced and directly relevant skills than we have been able to identify on the "open market". The original work plan envisioned the possibility of a delay in the availability of the Unnamed Developer; consequently, I have no concerns about accomplishment of the related tasks, even with a start 6 months later than anticipated.