



# LIONBYTES

AN OCCASIONAL COMMUNICATION TO SUPPORTERS OF THE NEMEA CENTER

NOVEMBER 2011

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**PLEASE JOIN US!!**  
**Nemea Night is 6:30**  
**Thursday, December**  
**8th in the East Pauly**  
**Ballroom on**  
**Campus.**

## The Nemea Center's Work Last Summer

Kim Shelton, Director

As has become a somewhat frustrating saga, the summer began with great uncertainty about our permit to work at Nemea. Recent political-economic problems in Greece combined with bureaucratic issues to delay the positive processing of our government permit. But thanks to members of the Central Council in the Ministry of Culture and the Director of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, we finally received the permission we needed to exca-



Excavations with the temple in the background.



Excavations, with the bath in the background

vate around the hero shrine at Nemea! We were looking for evidence of life at Nemea in the Prehistoric and Geometric periods, that is before about 750 B.C., as well as how the shrine developed in the Archaic Period (750-480 B.C.) and later. As always we were alert to learn anything we could about the area around the shrine.

You can imagine the excitement when our work uncovered the first clear evidence of Mycenaean activity at the site! There were, for the very first time, two complete Late

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Helladic pots. We had found sherds before here and elsewhere at the site, but now, deep below the Hero Shrine, was incontrovertible evidence of prehistoric activity.



We found also that as the shrine was constructed during the later, Archaic period, the builders seem to have taken great pains to build a barrier of stone and packed earth, probably to keep the re-directed Nemea River from harming the sacred site where Opheltes was honored. We continued to find Archaic pottery notably a crushed but whole bronze omphalos phiale, as well as sherds of an Attic black-figure vessel.

The squashed phiale comes out of the ground. Of course, as in any year's excavations, what we found posed as many questions as it answered. What exactly was the long wall discovered just west of the shrine? What about the road east of the shrine that heads north, but abruptly ends at the shrine rather than continuing southward? How does the discovery of prehistoric and Neolithic artifacts at the shrine help us understand the long history of the use of the location as a sacred spot? Only time will tell.

## Students at Nemea

Samantha Alford and Annie Parker  
Berkeley Undergraduate Students

This summer, we quickly realized that our field school experience would be unlike any school either of us had previously attended. In contrast to the “normal” education to which most UC Berkeley undergraduates are accustomed, we rolled out of bed every day before the sun even bothered to get up, we worked in the blazing heat, and in addition to traditional school “tools,” such as books and pencils, we added tools that we were unfamiliar with, namely shovels, picks, and trowels. While it was a bit of an adjustment, we both came to the conclusion that the hands-on training of field school is far superior to traditional classes. Where else would we be able to uncover beautifully decorated pottery or learn to illustrate a diagram of an ancient wall? And how else would we have gotten the opportunity to watch the rising sun emerge from behind the Temple of Zeus every day for six weeks?



Annie Parker overlooking Trench 2, west of the Hero

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With all these benefits, we were more than enthusiastic to pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow our way towards archaeological evidence and—hopefully—some answers. This season, our team dug to pursue questions surrounding the foundation of the Pan-Hellenic site. Why—beautiful sunrises aside—did the earliest occupants of the Nemea Valley choose to occupy this site? What type of occupation existed in Nemea previous to its ritual occupation as a Pan-Hellenic site?

Our quest to discover answers began as soon as we stepped on-site. The very first day provided an immediate introduction to the labor required to unearth answers to these guiding questions. Our daily collection of sherds and small finds, however, paled in comparison to our hourly collection of lessons on the precision techniques necessary for archaeological fieldwork, compliments of the more experienced workmen, Kostas and Dimitris. By the end of the season we may have been satisfied with our archaeological progress and finds, but Kostas was never quite satisfied with our (admittedly minimally) improved technique.

In stark contrast to our hectic workdays on site, village life in Mykines (ancient Mycenae) where we were lodged was thankfully slow-paced. We spent much of our time nursing sore muscles and blisters, but once we had toughened up, we progressed to exploring the village and venturing to Nauplion. Despite an ongoing taxi strike, we remained undaunted in our pursuit of adventures. Perhaps we were a bit overeager, because we were once left stranded at the “local” grocery store approximately 12 km from our village. Fortunately, we were quickly rescued by a sympathetic Canadian who was willing to find out just how many college students



Samantha Alford documenting figurines in the Mycenae Museum

he could fit into the back of his VW hatchback and drove us all home. We also entertained ourselves by bonding with the local animal population. Besides the many frogs that loved to hide in the shady corners of the trenches, we came across a friendly hedgehog while cleaning the trenches, and Samantha even brought one of the site’s adopted puppies, Peanut, home to America to live on her parent’s ranch on the Central Coast of California. After six weeks of intense bonding and working, the field school ended, and Samantha was left alone in scholarly solitude to do some independent research on ancient Mycenaean figurines from Petsas House. In addition to the hundreds of Petsas House figurines that she pulled from the museum’s storerooms, she also focused on analyzing figurines from different cultic areas in Mycenae. She was also lucky enough to be around the Mycenae Museum while conservators began work

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on several sections of the Petsas House frescoes, which became more clear and colorful with each passing work day. For both of us, the summer was an unforgettable experience. (Ed. note: Sam and Annie were two of eight Berkeley undergrads at Nemea this past summer.)

Work at Nemea continues to be international. Heather Graybehl from the University of Sheffield (England) is working on the late classical and Hellenistic pottery and Dr. Effie Athanassopoulos of the University of Nebraska is making exciting discoveries from her work on the Byzantine material. We are very pleased to note, too, that the Nemea Valley Archaeological Project is finishing preparations to publish a final report on work at prehistoric Tsoungiza, a site acquired by Berkeley for the Greek government decades ago, and subsequently turned over to the NVAP consortium for excavation and study.

Finally, it is important to note that the Center's work at Mycenae continues as well. This last summer graduate and undergraduate student staff worked on material from Petsas House cataloging pottery and small finds, cleaning and conserving the wonderful frescoes, analyzing soil samples, and cleaning and cataloging faunal material.

## The Temple Project

Elizabeth Langridge-Noti (Assistant Director) and Katerina Skleri (Architect and On-Site Supervisor)

Work on the reconstruction of the Temple of Zeus continues to move smoothly and rapidly according to plan. This Fall attention has been given to finishing the blocks of the epistyle, including the remaining triglyph-metope blocks. Aside from missing pieces, some of the blocks had the hollow interior spaces that are the norm for the stone of the temple. Both missing pieces and hollow areas were reconstructed and stabilized using either actual or technical stone. We are now finishing up the last three blocks of the epistyle which come from the northeastern corner of the building.

During October, we also worked on constructing the temporary concrete foundation that will serve as the base for a 'test-run' of the reconstructed epistyles at ground level. This foundation, laid at the northeastern corner of the temple, is constructed on a bed of small stones and will be removed when the epistyles are placed on the temple. The foundation itself consists of a platform on which a series of six concrete copies of the column capitals of the northeastern corner sit. It ech-





The “L-shaped” foundation—epistyles will be placed so they can be worked at ground level.

oes in its dimensions, the dimensions of the actual temple. The epistyle blocks will be put into place on top of these copies first so that any difficulties can be fixed at ground level rather than at a height of two stories in the air. It will also permit visitors, for a short time, to see the full epistyle close-up.

## The Tunnel Project

Stephen Miller, Director Emeritus

Conservation work on the tunnel entrance to the stadium began on October 17. The general goal is to consolidate and replace missing fragments of blocks so that visitors can walk through the tunnel without fear of falling pieces. (NB: The tunnel is structurally sound and in no danger of collapse, but the shear forces tend to break off fragments of voussoir blocks, especially in the third course below the keystone.) There are two basic parts to the work.

1) *Consolidation and gluing together of fragments of stone that are split and ready to fall.*

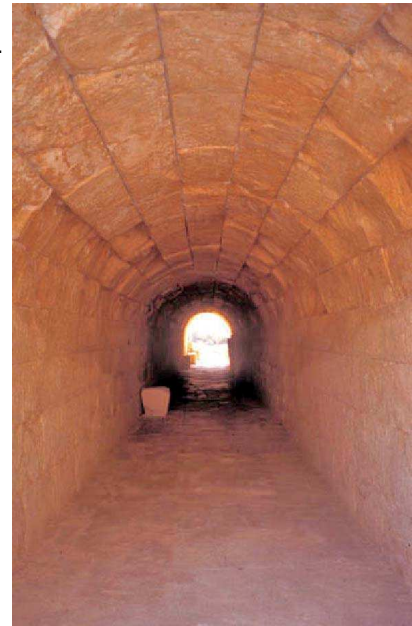


The head of the conservation team, Ioanna Dogani, inserting grout with a syringe.

The cracks will be cleaned and sealed followed by the injection of a grout (a mixture of hydraulic lime, pozzolan, and water) into the interior of the cracks and, where needed titanium nails will be inserted. Fallen fragments will be glued back in their original places.

2) *Replacements with technical stone.*

A few supplements of technical stone will be made in large gaps so that the lost surfaces of the stones will be replaced and will thereby



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create in certain places «bridges» between the voussoirs and the keystone of the vault. The technical stone will be made of hydraulic lime, brick powder, inorganic coloring agents, and water. Where needed the supplements will be reinforced by titanium rods. The work is slow and meticulous. After three weeks, the first six meters have been partially consolidated, but the pace is already accelerating as the team learns the idiosyncrasies of the stone. (Ed. note: weather permitting, the work should be completed in early spring.)



The supervising engineer, Dr. Costas Zambas, explains to members of the conservation team the methods of preparing the ancient broken surface for the attachment of modern replacement stone.

## The Greek-Euro Crisis and Nemea

Kim Shelton, Director

As most are aware, things are very difficult right now in Greece, often chaotic, especially economically and politically. Many of you might wonder how the national crisis is affecting the community of Nemea and what impact it is having on the work of the Nemea Center. Certainly the affect on the people of Nemea is more significant than what directly affects our research efforts. There are advantages to being in a rural community where the pressures of strikes and protests, as in central Athens, are seen on TV rather than experienced first hand. However, the wide scope of the unrest still reaches even the villages as transportation can be interrupted through strikes and blockades. Every Greek citizen has felt the financial crunch in some way, either through higher prices and taxes, or lowered wages and retirement, all part of the legislated austerity measures.

The economic issues especially affect the work of the Center in Greece. Everything we do costs substantially more than it has in the past. The Greek workforce at every level has been necessarily reduced and that includes mandatory early retirement for archaeological site-guards, no temporary staffing at any level of the Ministry departments (those employees who actually do the bureaucratic work that keeps the system running in other words), and many offices and businesses running on reduced hours and staff. The intricate workings of their complex civil service now understaffed means that necessary permits and communications can be terribly delayed or even returned. There is often a sense of uncertainty that we will be able to accomplish our goals, at least in the short run.

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At the same time however, there is a renewed sense of community and cooperation in Nemea and elsewhere. We are all in this together and together we will get beyond any difficulties. The Nemea Center has been able to bring money into the local community, even in a small way, by employing a significant number of people from Nemea and other nearby communities, and by increasing the number of consumers who shop at the mini market, eat and drink at the new *taverna* or the old *cafeneio*, and buy fuel for the many vans setting off for archaeological visits far and wide. Our work and our efforts on the site are greatly appreciated at many levels in the area and everyone chips in to help us advance our research, even on a shoestring! The traditional Greek saying “θα δούμε” or “we’ll see” has never been more appropriate as the key to success in the current climate. The key for us is to “plan for the long term, but go with the flow”.

## Nemea Night 2011

We will gather for the annual Nemea Night on Thursday, December 8th, in the Pauly East Ballroom in the ASUC building on campus. There will be as usual a reception with Greek inspired treats and Nemean wine, followed by the Director’s presentation of last summer’s work and next summer’s plans. Parking is available on a first-come, first-served basis in the lot below the ASUC (note that there are not many spaces here, though), or an any lot on campus. Parking permits are \$7.00 and must be purchased with exact change (no credit cards) at vending machines at the entrance or inside each lot. A campus parking map can be found at <http://pt.berkeley.edu/park>.



## The Nemean Games are Back!

The fifth modern Nemead takes place next June 23rd at the stadium in Nemea. For information on registering for the Games or to become a member of the Society, consult the website <http://nemeangames.org/>. This is a wonderful experience, and we encourage you to visit (or re-visit!) Nemea, and to participate in the Games.

