



# LIONBYTES

AN OCCASIONAL COMMUNICATION TO SUPPORTERS OF THE NEMEA CENTER

NOVEMBER 2013

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## Celebrate the Temple!



As we adumbrated in the spring edition of *LionBytes*, on June 15, 2013, a grand celebration of the completion of the current phase of temple reconstruction took place at the archaeological park. It was the occasion, as well, to thank the major donors who made the reconstruction possible: Theodore Papalexopoulos, the Opheltes Foundation, the Club Hotel Casino Loutraki, and a generous, but anonymous, donor whose gift allowed the completion of the project. A spokesman for the Ministry of Culture praised

the impact of our efforts on the cultural landscape of the Corinthia; James Wright, Director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, praised the cooperative and energetic spirit that brought the project to fruition, and Kostas Zambas, Greece's most famous "archaeological" engineer, gave an eloquent and well received address on the unique success of the project among others in Greece. Of course there was food! And good Nemean wine!



The Nemea Center for Classical Archaeology — Berkeley, California & Nemea, Greece  
*Bringing the Past to the Present*

## Temple Reconstruction's Future



Two phases of three have now been completed in the Temple Reconstruction Project. The third phase has a plan. However, the Greek ministry and the American School require that no permit may be sought until full funding for the continuation of the project has been secured. In the meantime, work will continue on the preservation, study, and exhibition of the temple. In particular, work needs to be done on the two “old” columns in the pronaos porch. These have never been carefully conserved.

## A Temple Spin-off

During the work on the reconstruction a shed was built that housed equipment; it also provided a dry workspace during the rainy season. The Nemea Center plans to turn part of that shed into an exhibit space for showing how the temple was reconstructed, and for displaying some of the unique tools that were developed to carry out the stonework. Center staff created a temporary display of this sort as part of the June celebration. The reconstruction project has drawn much attention and admiration from Greek officials and tourist alike; the exhibit space will tell how the project was planned and how it unfolded. It will greatly enhance a visitor's experience at the temple.



## Work on the Early Christian Basilica

The Basilica is a treasure less appreciated than the temple or the stadium at Nemea. But it represents one of the older, if not the oldest, Christian worship structure in the Peloponnesus. Early Christians built it on top of the Hellenistic Xenon. They used “spolia”, that is, pieces of the temple torn away and put to use in the new building. This building was in its turn torn apart by people seeking building materials for their own projects in the neighborhood and today only foundations and some near-ground-level ruins remain. The foundations are of very crumbly stone. Currently earth covers them in order to preserve what is left. In order for them to be exposed to students and tourists, they must first be carefully treated and conserved. The Center is seeking donations and grants to make this happen.

## Form Follows Function



Elsewhere at the site, Professor Effie Athanassopoulos of the University of Nebraska continued working on the Byzantine settlement in the sanctuary and near the stadium. Her most interesting discovery was many fragments from a quite large, ceramic, two-handed jug, not previously identified in this area. Water was commonly drawn from wells with a leather bucket contraption—and this ceramic shape mimics that leathery shape and, too, was used to

draw water! Dr. Athanassopoulos is shown working with a 3-D scanner but that jug to the right is not the new pot—we have only sherds from that one.

## Discoveries at Petsas House, Mycenae

Work continued on 2012's exciting on-the-last-day discovery, a kiln. Petsas House was a home, but primarily a factory and emporium for ceramics. A kiln was essential, but none had been discovered before. Of course nothing is simple in archaeology—what should be beneath the kiln but yet another well! These are often the repositories of many intriguing objects. While the sub-kiln well yielded little of interest, another discovered this year was filled with some broken Minoan pottery, as well as the usual refuse that was dumped into wells. Center staff will study all of this material in preparation for publication of the site.



The kiln discovered and excavated at Petsas House

## Conditions in Greece (staffing difficulties at Nemea)

We all continue to be very concerned about the dire circumstances Greece is in, and the treat the situation poses for the antiquities the world loves. And just re-



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cently the University of Athens declared its inability to continue operating as a result of government policies that have led to "the subversion and marginalization of higher education." At least seven other major Greek universities have subsequently closed. The universities are protesting the government's decision to reduce their administrative staff by nearly 50 percent or 1,349 p e r s o n n e l .

They say that the lack of staff simply make operation impossible. The Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Service within it are under immense budgetary pressure as well. At Nemea, there are not enough guards to keep the museum open for what used to be the normal six and one half hours each day. It is not at all clear what is going to happen if there are more layoffs. So far the site has not been compromised, and visitors are still visiting. We are watching the situation closely.



Peterson Museum at Nemea

## Nemea Night 2013

Thursday, December 5th, is Nemea Night! Mark your calendars and save the date. Kim Shelton will speak about this past year's events in the life of the Nemea Center. And of course there will be good food and Nemean wine.



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