



# LIONBYTES

AN OCCASIONAL COMMUNICATION TO SUPPORTERS OF THE NEMEA CENTER  
FOR CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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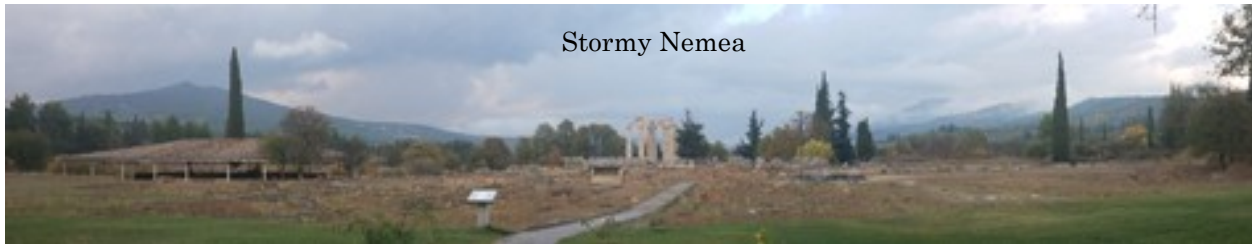
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nate to our work**



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Stormy Nemea

## **Happy Holidays from the Nemea Center! Director Kim Shelton on Exciting Developments**

I'm just back from Greece where I worked during the first semester of my year-long research sabbatical from Berkeley. Although over the years I have spent a lot of time in Greece, this was my first fall there in more than 15 years. Deeply engaged in my work, I still greatly enjoyed watching the summer transition to the winter, from the end of the grape harvest to the start of the olive harvest. I would like to share with you some of the progress I saw in the work of the Nemea Center.



## **Work at Mycenae Petsas House Continues to Reveal Its Secrets**

My primary research goal this academic year is to write the first volume of the final publication of the Petsas House excavation. This fall in the Mycenae museum I advanced my study of the pottery produced at the site through work on material

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both from the old (1950s) and new (2000-2013) excavations. I have now completed my study of the material from the well deposit that was excavated from 2002-2007 and produced thousands of artifacts, especially pottery. This material provides our best evidence for the domestic and industrial activity that went on in the building, in addition to how it ended. Although used primarily for water needed in the production of pottery, the well became a convenient place to dump the seemingly endless debris that resulted from the earthquake that destroyed Petsas House about 1320 BCE. Hundreds of pots were cataloged, drawn, and photographed. This fall I also studied a huge deposit of debris from the yard or court of the building (excavated 2007-2008). This debris came from the collapse downhill of the building and its contents. As time went on, it got jumbled up both through natural processes like erosion and through man-made action, such as agricultural plowing and use as filling for terrace walls in periods from the Geometric to the Hellenistic periods. Over a dozen new vases were mended up from sherds scattered all over this area and it is clear where most of them originated in the building before the earthquake.



Mycenae museum workroom with sherds from Trench 10, the yard or court of the building

## New Results from Old Finds

From the old excavation, with our conservator, Maria Dimitrakopoulou, I began a conservation and restoration project for the beautiful fineware vases from the 1950s excavation that have been in pieces and covered with blackened adhesive for



Trench 10 sherds from 2007 excavation with large vase fragments some of which join vases from



Restored stirrup jar from Room A, 1950

decades. This effort led to the discovery of additional joining pieces from unidentified and unstudied 1950s sherds and to additional vases, including some excavated by us in the new excavations in the yard. This has helped me have a much better

understanding of the way the building was destroyed and disturbed following the abandonment of the ruins and has helped me complete a project goal to identify

the context of materials from the undocumented old excavation. We now have pots made from pieces excavated in 1951, 2007, and 2008. Remarkable!

## Debra Trusty

### Cooking Ware Maven Extraordinaire

Debra Trusty came highly recommended from Florida State University to our excavation team at Petsas House in 2006. She quickly became an experienced trench supervisor, masterfully excavating our well deposit (see above) in one of its most productive seasons. Her exposure to a significant amount of cooking pottery from the well and her natural ability to find and make joins ignited her interest in this highly understudied type of pottery. Cooking ware is a broad category of ceramic vessels and devices whose clay and shape make them useful in kitchens and at small domestic hearths. Deb began



Tripod cook pot from well deposit

her formal study six years ago as part of her dissertation. She examined their shape and the production techniques used to make them, as well as the characteristics of the clay used to construct them. Ceramics from other sites around Greece were also studied, such as Zygorouries and Korakou in the Corinthia region. Using a dino-lite microscopic camera, a petrographic microscope, and Neutron Activation Analysis, she determined that the cooking vessels from Petsas House were all members of a single production unit based in Mycenae (likely the producers at Petsas House themselves!). From here, she categorized the qualities of the cooking vessels (their sizes, shapes, and other characteristics) and determined that for cooking pots at least, Petsas House probably operated as an independent ceramic workshop that had interactions with members of the palace at Mycenae when they needed vessels for feasting activities. These findings are very helpful for reconstructing the political economy of Mycenaean Greece and



Deb working away!



Just a fraction of the pots from the well—these excavated in 2007

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examining the processes of ceramic production in the Bronze Age.

Deb received her PhD in December 2016 and is currently teaching at the University of Iowa. She plans to expand her study to other sites around Greece in the coming years in order to determine if these conclusions are valid on a wider geographical and political scale. Meanwhile her Petsas House study will be published as a chapter in the forthcoming volume on the excavation.

## Tomb 104

### Aidonia Reveals some Secrets



Aidonia in the foreground



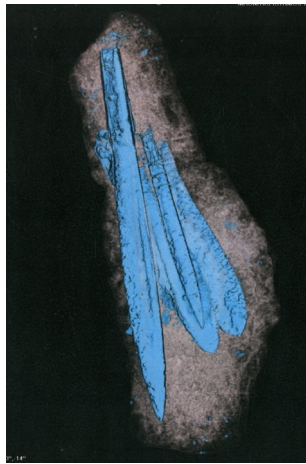
Nemea Museum workroom full of Tomb 104 lots.

Meanwhile, in the Nemea museum research also continued on a daily basis throughout the fall. Since we got a late start to our excavation season this summer due to “circumstances beyond our control”, our final day in the field was only a couple days before our departure from Greece. This meant that we were unable to initiate even a preliminary study of the finds. So I spent a couple hours every day and many more on the weekends cataloging artifacts, mostly pottery, from Aidonia. I focused my efforts primarily on material from Tomb 104, the undisturbed Late Bronze Age chamber tomb we found under several meters of habitation fills (Feature 57) dating from the Iron Age to the Middle Byzantine period. **Tomb 104** is a large round chamber tomb (almost 6m in diameter). Our team cleared it to the level of the floor on which three primary burials were excavated and in which three cists had been cut containing a minimum of six further burials. So far, 58 whole vases ranging in date from about 1500 to 1200 BCE are either completely reassembled or are under conservation. Some of them are unique examples including a lovely goblet made specifically for ritual liquid offerings. In another case, we were able to x-ray our bundle of bronze weapons, excavated in a

Goblet that is also a rhyton for libations



block of soil, to learn more of what to expect before these four, as it turned out, gold-handled weapons were carefully extracted in laboratory conditions. Maria Dimitrakopoulou has been amazing in her conservation of all materials. We have only just begun to assess the material from Feature 57, the thick levels of fill over Tomb 104. In a very preliminary estimate, we have at least 50 whole or restorable vases



Bronze weapons x-rayed



Maria working on one of the daggers



Feature 57 askodavla

and more than 300 small finds, such as figurines and lamps, from at least six different periods; the finds from the Late Roman and Middle Byzantine period are the most remarkable and unexpected. Effie Athanassopoulos, our collaborator from the University of Nebraska on the Nemea Medieval material, was in residence at Nemea in October and November (see more below) and was able to take a preliminary look at some of it. She was wowed by both the quantity and quality of the material, especially the number of whole pots and diagnostic wares, all dating to the 12th and 13th centuries CE. They are comparable to material from Nemea but are represented by more complete examples, such as several large painted course wares like the water-carrier *askodavla*, which will contribute to our research at BOTH sites!

## Medieval Nemea Redivivus

### Effie Athanassopoulos Readies an *Hesperia* Article



Sgraffito sherd from stadium

Longtime collaborator, Effie Athanassopoulos, is on sabbatical too and spent all of her fall in Greece, including more than a month in Nemea. Her study of material from the Nemea excavations focused on the Stadium deposits, EE25 Lot 140, FF23 Lots 9&10, which came from household trash pits or *bothroi* beyond the outskirts of the Medieval village. This material is currently being prepared for publication in the academic journal *Hesperia*, so one purpose of the study season was to check the databases for completeness, take additional photographs, complete draw-

ings/profiles, and build additional 3D models. The lucky circumstance that complete examples of vases from this year's excavation at Aidonia, especially coarse and cooking wares, were on nearby tables allowed for an even better identification process. The 3D material will be submitted to journals that can accommodate it, while currently, several 3D models from the stadium deposits are available on sketchfab: <https://sketchfab.com/effieathan/collections/nemea-glazed-wares>



Effie working on a 3D model

## From Rubbish to Ritual

### Stephanie Kimmey (UCB 2007)'s Study of Nemea Wells Yields New Insights into Sanctuary Ritual



Stephanie as Nemea Registrar

Stephanie Kimmey has been working at Nemea since she was an undergraduate at Cal and attended our field school in 2006. That very first summer she worked on an area of the sanctuary that included well deposits and her unraveling of those fueled her interests in ancient religion, votive rituals, and pottery. After graduating with a BA in 2007, Stephanie went on to get a post-bac from UCLA, MA from Florida State, and this month her PhD in Art and Archaeology from the University of Missouri, Columbia. Throughout this period, she continued to work at Nemea moving up from student to trench supervisor to Museum Registrar.

She continued to be intrigued by the well deposits, and now has written a dissertation on what they tell us about Nemea and the rituals that were practiced there over the life-history of the sanctuary. Of course, Nemea was a place of rural cult activity due to its location within the Nemea Valley, removed from large polis centers. But the site is primarily known for the panhellenic Sanctuary of Zeus. However, our sanctuary is often in fact overlooked in the larger study of Greek religion and sanctuaries. When it is treated, it is usually just included in larger discussions of the panhellenic cycle, assuming that all four sanctuaries—Olympia, Isthmia, Delphi, and Nemea—functioned in a similar way. Stephanie's dissertation focuses on the 6th to 3rd centuries BCE. She utilizes the archaeological record, the architectural building programs, and the landscape to refine the history of the sanctu-

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ary and reconstruct the visitors' experiences. She specifically looks at finds from ten wells to propose a new methodology for the study of sanctuary ritual. This methodology breaks new ground in recognizing the usefulness of wells within the discussion of Greek sanctuaries and religion, by identifying the diverse activities occurring in the sanctuary while at the same time improving our understanding of ritual deposition and rubbish.

## Work in the Peterson Nemea Museum The Kanellopoulos Foundation Steps Up



We are just beginning a major update and modernization of the insulation and electrical systems in our basement storeroom at the Nemea Museum. This extensive work is made possible thanks to extremely generous funding from the Paul and Alexandra Kanellopoulos Foundation. In addition to this much needed and extensive renovation, conservation work is going on at this very moment in the museum workroom. We are also preparing a study as we plan to re-do all the exhibits.

## Looking Forward...

It has been a great fall research season with much work and many surprises—and surely more to come! I feel excited and well prepared to continue my work on the Petsas House publication in the spring as a Research Fellow at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington DC. And then, of course, we will have another summer of excavation and work at Nemea and Aidonia and Mycenae.

## Nemea Night 2018

### No Nemea Night 2017—But I'll Be Back!

Don't forget to mark your calendars for **Tuesday, December 4th, 2018** when we will hold the next Nemea Night! I will report in person the amazing accomplishments of 2017 and 2018. See you there!

Professor Kim Shelton  
Director, Nemea Center for Classical Archaeology