



LIONBYTES

AN OCCASIONAL COMMUNICATION TO SUPPORTERS OF THE NEMEA CENTER

MARCH-APRIL 2008

IN THIS LIONBYTES



Shelton named Director of the Nemea Center
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*Come to the New Nemean Games
June 21-22, 2008*



Kim Shelton Named Permanent Director of the Nemea Center



Kim Shelton, Nemea Center Director

As announced in the September/October 2007 LionBytes, the Classics Department was authorized by the Campus Administration to search for a permanent Director of the Nemea Center for Classical Archaeology and a tenure track Assistant Professor of Classical Archaeology. After an exhaustive national and international search chaired admirably by Professor Mark Griffith, four finalists were interviewed and made presentations on campus in February. Subsequently, the Department voted unanimously to offer the posts to Kim Shelton; she has accepted the appointments which will become official July 1st. Thus, after three years of important activities, Shelton will be made permanent in her leadership roles as archaeologist and Director of the Center.

Stephen Miller spent his career at Nemea and developed it into a model site all the while discovering and publishing extensively. Three years ago upon his retirement we needed someone who could step right in, who was an outstanding classical archaeologist, had excavated successfully in Greece, and who would build on the pathbreaking work of Miller. Over the last three years, Shelton has demonstrated great intelligence, discipline, clear-sightedness, patience, and imagination in creating a Center that is at once a worthy successor to previous work at Nemea and alert to new advances in that work both in terms of research at the site and in using the site as a teaching venue for graduate and undergraduate students.



Steve Miller, Director Emeritus

Shelton is an experienced field archaeologist. She is, in particular, an outstanding

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‘digging’ archaeologist. At Mycenae since 1989 she has worked with Spyros Iakovidis, the Greek excavator, and also with Elizabeth French of the British School of Archaeology at Athens. Then for five summers more she conducted her own excavation at Mycenae under the auspices of Iakovidis and the Archaeological Society of Athens and for the last three summers has continued excavations as part of the Nemea Center program. There she has concentrated on the Petsas House, a Late Helladic (14th century BCE) ceramic factory and warehouse which is the only example from Mycenae and the only from its period (LH IIIA 2) in Mycenaean World. In addition, Shelton has expertise in museum work which is ideal for the needs of the Peterson Museum at Nemea: from 1994 to 2002 she worked to inventory, organize, move, and install material stored at Mycenae and Nauplion in a new museum at Mycenae.

.Shelton’s research has centered on the Aegean Bronze Age. This, the prehistoric glories of Crete and Mainland Greece, is particularly fruitful for it provides the context of the legendary Trojan War and both the summit and decline of these great civilizations into a period of transition which ends with the emergence of Archaic and Classical Greece some four hundred years later. She has concentrated on using pottery to elucidate artistic and economic aspects of this period.



Kim Working with a Student Cataloging Sherds

Shelton came to Berkeley with experience running a summer field school at Mycenae; she immediately organized similar field schools for the Center. In two sequential four week sessions each of the past two summers she brought graduate and undergraduate students to work on excavated material from Nemea and to excavate and work in the museum at Mycenae; she took them on bus trips to the major sights of the Peloponnesus and central Greece and offered lectures on various archaeological topics. She mentored, encouraged, supported, and inspired. Students responded enthusiastically. In just

two years, three undergraduates have decided on graduate work in Classical Archaeology because of Shelton’s mentoring; many others have gained a new and deep appreciation for the classical world through her humane, deeply caring approach to undergraduate students.

As for her role as an assistant professor, Shelton has amply demonstrated her fine

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qualities during the time she has been with the Center and Department. She is an outstanding teacher. In addition to the normal courses, she has also regularly taught a freshman seminar as an extra course each semester and has supervised five to six undergraduates in the Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program; students from the URAP have in many cases then accompanied her to Greece the next summer to participate in the Field Schools at Nemea and Mycenae. She has also taken with her to Greece graduate students each of the last two summers. Reports from these graduate students indicate that Shelton also excels in the informal, tutorial role of guide for these students as well as in the formal atmosphere of the graduate seminars on campus.

We are very pleased to have her appointments made permanent.

Let the Games Begin!

Everything in Place for the New Nemean Games 2008

After the dedication of the ancient stadium and its opening as a park on July 6, 1994, a group of local citizens came up with an exciting idea: Why not revive the



Photo from the Society's website
<http://www.nemeagames.gr/>

ancient games at the Panhellenic Site of Nemea? Working together with Stephen Miller, The Society for the Revival of the Nemean Games based in Nemea was formed in 1994; its Statement of Purpose eloquently sets out its goal:

"It is our belief that the modern Olympic Games, despite their obvious success in many respects, have become increasingly removed from the average person. Our goal is the participation, on the sacred ancient soil of Greece, of anyone and everyone, in games that will revive the spirit of the Olympics. We will achieve this by re-

living authentic ancient athletic customs in the ancient stadium of Nemea."

After extensive local and international public relations, the first iteration of the Games took place in late July, 1996. The aspiration was to offer the average person a chance to participate in an ancient experience, to unite the 20th century AD with the 4th century BC through the modern's bare feet on the ancient track; it was important to make this experience available especially because the modern Olympics had become so professionalized, commercialized, and removed from the realm of ordinary folk.

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The Games took place in the ancient stadium, a site which Miller had excavated, and took advantage of one of his most amazing discoveries—a tunnel which led from the ‘locker room’ to the stadium and through which ancient—and now modern—athletes could emerge into the stark sunlight of the running track and to the cheers of enthusiastic fans. Miller had also, based on the research of Professor Panos Valavanis of the University of Athens, reconstructed an exact replica of the starting mechanism used in the ancient games. At those first games more than 650 runners from 29 countries, ranging in age from 10 to 93 took part; then Berkeley Chancellor Chang Lin Tien, former Chancellor Albert Bowker, and then U.S. Ambassador Thomas Niles were among the participants. Subsequently in the next Olympic year, 2000, Miller and the Society organized the games again and again they were a great success; this time, 730 runners from 45 countries participated, both dignitaries and common folk; Berkeley Chancellor Robert Berdahl ran this time. Finally, a third iteration took place in 2004 when more than 1,000 ‘athletes’ participated in the Games.



Berkeley Chancellor Berdahl at the 2000 Games

Since the retirement of Miller from UCB in late 2004, the future of the Games has been entirely in the hands of the Society. It is through the efforts of this group, led by its President Stathis Skleres and its Honorary President Stephen Miller that the fourth celebration of the Games will take place June 21st and 22nd, 2008, in the ancient stadium at Nemea. Thanks to the efforts of Nicos Makris, Director of the Temple of Zeus Reconstruction Project, and Dr. Costas Zambas, and with the support of the local Ephor of Antiquities, Dr. Konstantinos Kissas, participants will be able to use the tunnel, which has had to be closed as a safety precaution. Everyone is invited to come to and participate in the Games. The web address is http://www.nemeagames.gr/eng/registration_form_eng.html. There you will find instructions on how to register. Come join us in June. Let the Games begin!

Saving the Stadium Tunnel at Nemea

In 1978 excavation of the early Hellenistic stadium revealed a late fourth century BC tunnel from the area where athletes prepared for competitions into the stadium itself. The tunnel opened at the point directly across from the judges’ stand. Similar tunnels are known at other Greek stadia, notably in the area, at Olympia and at Epidauros. Athletes entering for their competition was a highly dramatic event; the tunnel entrance allowed those men to prepare themselves out of sight of the crowd assembled to see them in competition until the moment of their contest.

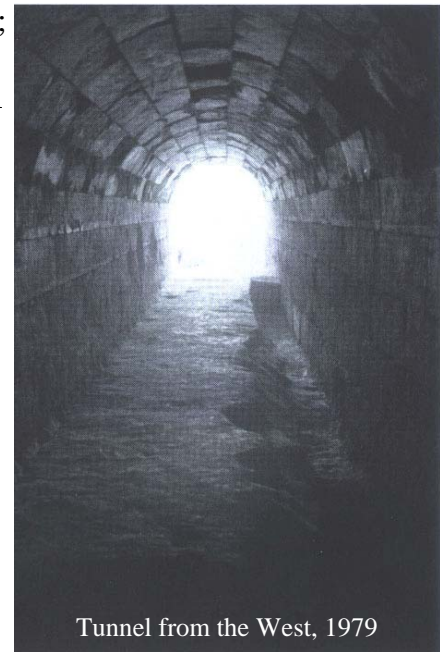
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The tunnel is about thirty-six and a third meters long; the interior is two and a half high and two meters wide. It was constructed by removing the soft natural rock from a trench between the athletes' preparation area and the stadium track. Stone walls and a vaulted roof were then constructed. Following this, the dirt was put back, leaving the arched entrance way as a tunnel.

Careful study of the tunnel has revealed some details of its life. First of all, we know that stone of differing quality was available for its construction. Although all the stone comes from a local quarry, there is rather weak limestone and there is harder limestone which could bear more stress. The construction of the tunnel also set in motion circumstances which encouraged a process of disintegration to proceed for as air and moisture circulated between the tunnel and the outside, and moisture was created differentially, stone began to chip off and even in some cases drop to the floor. Upon excavation, repairs to it were done using special concrete. But the damage continued. Since Stephen Miller, the then Director of the Nemea Excavations, was unable to deal with this problem before his retirement in 2004, and the person he recommended to the new Director of Nemea, Kim Shelton, to deal with it failed to carry through on his obligations, it took some time to act regarding the tunnel's condition. However, we were able to enlist the help of Nicos Makris in addressing the problem for the long term. He installed emergency scaffolding at the west end of the tunnel. Then



Tunnel from the West, 1979



Tunnel from the West, 2007, with Emergency Scaffolding in Place

this past summer, 2007, Shelton met with the President of the Society for the Revival of the Nemean Games and discussed the tunnel in light of the upcoming games. She was assured that, with or without the tunnel, the games would go on—but both agreed that having the tunnel open was highly desirable as its use was a very important part of the Games.

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The challenge for us today is to restore and preserve the tunnel for future generations. The first priority is to insure the safety of anyone inside the tunnel. To achieve this, scaffolding will be placed the length of the tunnel. This is not meant to hold up the roof stones—indeed, the scaffolding does not touch the tunnel itself at any point except the floor—but rather will catch any falling debris before it hits anyone. In conjunction with this scaffolding, a curtain of plastic ribs or similar material will be placed at the entrances of the tunnel to minimize the circulation of air through the space. These two interventions should greatly slow the deterioration of the tunnel and will allow the tunnel to be used during the New Nemean Games this year.

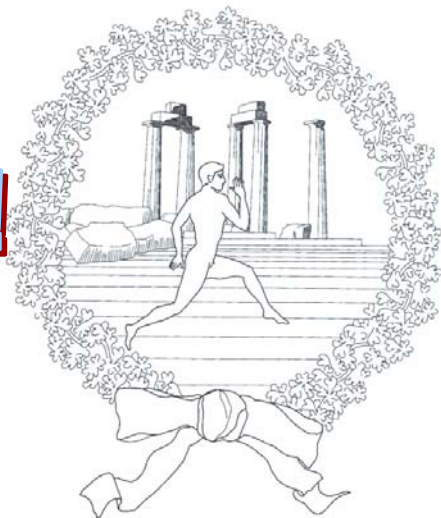
But a long-term solution is needed. In late October 2007 Makris came to Berkeley and in discussions with the Nemea Center Executive Committee, the Center enthusiastically agreed to continue to take the lead on this project as part of the Center's work. Earlier in the month the President and Honorary President of the Society for the Revival of the Nemean Games had visited the Ephor of the Corinthia, Dr. Konstantinos Kissas, to recommend the project. With all the pieces in place, work on the conservation and restoration of the tunnel can begin.

The Center plans a thorough engineering study to determine what measures need to be taken in order to make the tunnel structurally sound over the long run, and safe for human use once again. Drs. Nicos Makris and Kostos Zambas will conduct this study. The study alone will be very expensive; we are most fortunate in having Mr. Theodore Papalexopoulos's financial support to carry it through. The cost of the actual work has yet to be estimated; funds will need to be raised for this part of the project. But the monument, as all those at Nemea, is invaluable and we feel we must invest our resources and raise additional funds to complete this very important work.

Join Us at the Games!
Come to Nemea June 21-22!

Register at

http://www.nemeagames.gr/eng/registration_form_eng.html



Logo of the Society for the Revival of the Nemean Games.

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