



LIONBYTES

AN OCCASIONAL COMMUNICATION TO SUPPORTERS OF THE NEMEA CENTER

JUNE 2010

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Excavations Underway!

Last Tuesday, June 8, the next phase of our exciting work at Nemea began. The three-year project, “Excavations at Ancient Nemea, 2010-2012,” will investigate the process of transition in the area of the later Sanctuary of Zeus from border region, or hinterland, between emerging political powers to a ritual center that became a focus for pan-Hellenic national and ethnic identity; a change that the area exhibits as it moves from the prehistoric period into the early historical one. The site is well positioned for the examination of this process as it sits at the crossroads of routes that run from Mycenae to the Corinthian Gulf and from the central Arcadian heartland to the Argive plain. It also acts as a liminal zone that stimulates interaction between three regions and their emerging poleis (Phlious, Kleonae, Argos). Thus the Nemea Excavations Project has the Ability to be able to explore and define boundaries and transitions both diachronically and synchronically; between



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Bronze Age centers, among poleis, and from habitation to ritual use. Indeed, although the development of ritual centers and their relationship to earlier Mycenaean sites are subjects discussed individually at other sites, it has been until now difficult or impossible to bring Nemea into these dialogues, despite its being able to exhibit evidence for both issues. We hope that this project will make a significant contribution to our knowledge of Aegean prehistory, Iron Age regional transition, and studies of the development of organized ritual spaces.



David Romano Nemea Lecturer

In March the Center had its second Nemea Lecture. David Gilman Romano, University of Pennsylvania Museum and a veteran of the Nemea excavations of the late 1970's, presented on his Mt. Lykaion Excavation and Survey Project. This site



in Arkadia is a *synergasia* (cooperative venture) between the Tripolis *ephoreia* (Greek Archaeological Service), the University of Arizona, and Romano's own University of Pennsylvania. It is a large operation with 45 students and staff involved. In the course of excavation many elements of a sanctuary have been discovered including a bath house and hotel, as at Nemea, as well as a hippodrome. This feature has been the subject of test trenches and is of particular interest because of the possibility of a hippodrome being located to the west of the bath and heroon at Nemea. In a particularly exciting discovery, ash pits at the site of the sanctuary's altar to Zeus contain sacrificial material in unbroken sequence from Final Neolithic, Early Helladic and late Mycenaean periods, then directly on through the Dark Ages, Geometric and Archaic periods into Classical times and beyond. Such

continuity of cult has not been so clearly demonstrated before and holds tantalizing possibilities for our own work on the relationship of Neolithic, Early Helladic, and Mycenaean material to later material at the sanctuary at Nemea.

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Reconstruction of the Temple of Zeus Update

This last year saw the continuation of the project for the erection of four additional columns (K-27, K-28, K-29, K-30) in the North East corner of the Temple. This project began in 2004 after the completion of the original project of two columns (K-25 and K-26) along the North side in 2002. The completion of the current phase improves appreciably the understanding of the architecture of the temple and makes it much more easily apprehended by the general visitor. The work will also help preserve the original architectural members and fragments of the building by restoring them to their original and intended position rather than exposed to the environment and elements on the ground. With the generous anonymous donation of \$300,000, the temple project continues in 2010 under the direction of Dr. Kim Shelton with architect and on-site supervisor, Ms. Katerina Sklere, and civil engineering and restoration consultant, Dr. K. Papantonopoulos (see next story). Work will continue with the finishing work on K27 and minor corrections and finishing will continue on other parts of this phase. The creation of supplements and joining of blocks of the triglyph and metope and epistyle blocks for their eventual placement on the temple as the final part of this phase of the restoration will also take place. Furthermore, measurements of and corrections to the final heights of the columns will be taken so that by next year it should be possible to place some of the triglyph and metope blocks on the temple itself.



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New Engineer at Nemea

With the departure of Professor Nikos Makris as the Director and supervising engineer of the Temple Reconstruction Project, the Center has hired Dr. Konstantinos Papantonopoulos, a civil engineer who worked in the private sector for a decade and then through 1995 worked for the Greek Ministry of Culture on the conservation/restoration of the Temple of Epikourian Apollo at Bassi. After his doctorate he worked by contract both on modern construction (road bridges) and ancient monuments, specifically, the Theatre of Argos and walls at Messini where he won an award for his restoration work on the 'Arkadian Gate' there. Since 2008 he is a member of the reconstruction oversight committee for the Athenian Acropolis, including consultation on the exhibition placement for the Parthenon sculpture in the new museum.

Land Acquisition Fails

We regret to report that the Center's efforts to purchase land in order to join the Sanctuary to the Stadium have come to naught for the present, at least. After two years of work on expropriation proceedings, the Greek court decision required us to purchase all the desired parcels, or none at all, and at the same time set land valuations so high that we could not possibly have purchased them. We will continue to pursue efforts to purchase individual parcels, but for now acquiring more land for future archaeological work is on hold.

Nemea Center Reorganized

The Classics Department has approved reorganization of the Center to streamline its governance. The new structure creates an Advisory Board which oversees activities of the Center in support of our Director, Professor Kim Shelton. This arrangement replaces the former bicameral setup which had both an Advisory Committee and an Executive Committee. Those appointed to the new Advisory Board are Crawford Greenewalt, Professor of Classical Archaeology (emeritus), Mark Griffith, Professor of Classics, Christopher Hallett, Professor of Art History and Classics, Alison Kirk, graduate student in Ancient History and Mediterranean Archaeology, and Andrew Stewart, Professor of Art History and Classics. Robert Knapp, Professor of Classics (emeritus) is Chair of the Advisory Board and Director Shelton is a member *ex officio*.