

## Behind Closed Doors: Designing New Galleries for the Upjohn Exhibit Hall

What happens behind the closed doors of a museum that is undergoing renovation and expansion? It might surprise some readers to learn that, while the Kelsey's public programs have been drastically curtailed since its galleries closed in mid-August, many of its staff members are busier than ever.

Before the Museum reopens in September 2009, the staff faces no less a challenge than to invent a completely fresh design for the permanent collection to be installed in the new Upjohn Exhibit Hall. Not only will this installation, spread over two floors, occupy more than three times the display space available in the old building. It must also provide a coherent and engaging presentation of the Kelsey collections, which range over the vast sweep of Mediterranean cultures from prehistory to the Middle Ages and from Gaul and Carthage in the west as far east as modern-day Iran. Hellenistic and Roman Curator Elaine Gazda is coordinating this daunting undertaking. New York-based museum designer Clifford La Fontaine is acting as a consultant, while

IPCAA student Adrian Ossi is rendering digital mockups (see sample images below) using the 3D Studio Max program.

Planning meetings began more than a year ago. Curators first devised major presentational schemes for their own areas of oversight. As one example, Greek and Near East Curator Margaret Root decided to highlight the Kelsey's unique cast of the Bisitun Monument, an ambitious rock relief that depicts the Persian king Darius I (r. 522–486 BCE) announcing his imperial achievements to the god Ahuramazda. The monument overlooks the trade route later known as the Silk Road and includes a trilingual inscription in Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian that has provided a key for deciphering all cuneiform-written languages of the ancient Near East. It thus speaks to issues that resonate throughout the exhibition: kingship, cosmos, trade, empire, and writing, among others.

Dynastic Egypt Curator Janet Richards offers a second example. She will mount cases on such themes as "the rise to social and political complexity," "furnishing a

house for eternity," and "the middle class in the New Kingdom." The spectacular Saite Period coffin of Djheutymose will be displayed upright in a three-sided case that will allow visitors to see, inside the coffin lid and base, images of the goddesses Nut and Imenetet, whom the ancient Egyptians believed embraced the deceased when the coffin was closed.

A third example is the exhibit on villa life in the Bay of Naples curated by Elaine Gazda. This section, which will include a mockup of a Roman bathhouse as well as dining, garden, and funerary themes, introduces a room devoted to the almost full-scale watercolor replicas of the wall paintings in the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii by the Italian artist Maria Barosso. These evocative renderings of young women undergoing initiatory rituals were never displayed in full in the old Kelsey building, which has no gallery large enough to accommodate them.

While opting to organize the installation more or less chronologically, curators also tried to emphasize intersections among the various regions represented



*This virtual rendition of the new gallery space shows how, upon entering the Museum, visitors would pass the guard desk on the left and immediately confront the Bisitun cast at the end of the corridor.*



*Former Postclassical Curator Thelma Thomas, now at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, found it helpful to use computer modeling to design this textile case from a distance.*

## Notes from the Director

This is truly an exciting time to be working at the Kelsey Museum. Every day we see new pieces of the William E. Upjohn Exhibit Hall falling into place. The construction project continues to be on schedule, and we are poised to take possession of the building on December 15. Interior finishing work has begun. The wall of windows along the loggia on the south side will be installed in two weeks, and the building will be completely enclosed by November 3 (see the construction photos on page 5).

We had two very good pieces of news over the summer. The first is that the Kelsey passed its reaccreditation review by the American Association of Museums with flying colors. In the words of the AAM, "Accreditation recognizes high standards in individual museums and ensures that museums continue to provide the best possible service to the Public." Our district congressman, John Dingell, sent us a letter of congratulation saying, "This recognition is a tribute to the Kelsey Museum's great efforts to provide a truly remarkable educational experience, accessible to the University of Michigan, the State of Michigan and the entire country." Of the nation's nearly 17,500 museums only about 776 are currently accredited by the AAM. Thirteen other museums received accreditation this year. Among them are the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and the Milwaukee Public Museum. We are honored to be included in this group.

The second piece of good news includes money as well as honor. We have been awarded \$300,000 from the Preservations and Access Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. These funds will pay for state-of-the-art compact storage shelving for our collections storage room in the new building, open storage drawers for the new galleries, and many of the extra expenses involved in moving the collections into their new home. We currently have grant requests pending with the National Endowment for the Arts for other exhibit cabinetry and with the Institute of Museum and Library Services for specialized conservation of the Barosso watercolors. As you can see from the cover story and pictures, the curators and design team are making good progress on deciding what to put into the new cases.

When next I write you, we will have moved into the new building and be putting the finishing touches on the renovations of Newberry Hall. I can hardly wait.

*Sharon Herbert, Director*

template intercultural connections made through trade and military occupation.

Once these larger installation issues were resolved, curators turned to the mockup of display cases containing smaller objects. To find artifacts suitable for explicating their themes, they combed through the registry database and pored over items long kept in storage cabinets. In the process they sometimes discovered holdings they had never seen before.

Graeco-Roman Egypt Curator Terry Wilfong, for instance, came across a wide selection of food remains from the Graeco-Roman town of Karanis, Egypt (including garlic cloves, lentils, and wheat ears, along with some pieces of bread). Look for them in the Karanis case of artifacts associated with the "market."

Curators then made lists of the objects they hoped to display. These lists were vetted and sometimes winnowed by conservators Suzanne Davis and Claudia Chemello as well as registry staffers Sebastián Encina and Michelle Fontenot. Assistant Registrar Kate Carras photographed each item.

Finally, the mockup of individual cases began. This too became a collaborative project. Conservators had to evaluate the suitability of proposed lighting and mounting. Some objects, for example, will need to be installed in special boxes that shield them from ambient light. And only objects that are impervious to light, such as Greek pottery, can potentially be exhibited along the Upjohn Wing's long window wall. Clifford La Fontaine offered aesthetic advice. Exhibition Coordinator Scott Meier judged the physical feasibility of each case mockup. Curators also held monthly meetings to comment

on one another's mockups and discuss how to establish connections among their various sections.

Now that the mockup process is complete, the display cases must be ordered. (Some will have drawers that visitors can pull out to view items related to those on display.) Artifacts must be documented, conserved, then actually installed in their new cases in the Upjohn Wing. An integrated graphics program, label copy, handouts, and audio materials must be created—all before September 2009!

*Margaret Lourie*

*continued from page 1*

by the Museum's collections. They did so partially by calculating sight lines so that visitors could view simultaneous cultures, such as Dynastic Egypt and archaic Cyprus, in a single glimpse. For

similar reasons the staircase that links the first-floor exhibits on Graeco-Roman Egypt with the second-floor exhibits on villa life in the Bay of Naples will be lined with transport amphoras and funerary inscriptions for Roman soldiers and sailors, encouraging visitors to con-



*Hellenistic and Roman Curator Elaine Gazda ponders whether to include this mosaic fragment in the bathhouse mockup.*



*Designer Clifford La Fontaine (left) consults with Exhibition Coordinator Scott Meier on the mockup of the Cyprus case set up by Curator of Academic Outreach Lauren Talalay and Elaine Gazda.*

## General Luigi Palma di Cesnola and the Kelsey Collection of Cypriot Antiquities



Limestone statuette of male offering bearer from the sanctuary at Golgoi, Cyprus, late second century BCE or after, from the Kelsey "Cesnola Collection."

At one time or another, most museum-goers have probably stumbled, unknowingly, across objects from the so-called Cesnola Collection. Amassed in the mid-1800s by Cesnola, this large and controversial assemblage of Cypriot objects and works of art is now dispersed among countless museums and private collections throughout the world. Although long hidden in storage, the Kelsey's own collection of Cesnola's "spoils" amounts to approximately 200 objects, a small sample of which will be displayed in the new Upjohn Wing. This new exhibition will allow the public a chance to learn about Cyprus's intriguing history as well as the life of Cesnola, one of the more flamboyant personalities in archaeology's early history.

Luigi Palma di Cesnola (1832–1904) was born near Turin, Italy, into an aristocratic family. Choosing a military career, he fought valiantly for the unification of Italy and then later in the Crimean War (1853–1856) before deciding to immigrate to America (ca. 1860). Once in America, he joined the Civil War, where he was wounded, imprisoned, and then released. He was presented a Medal of Honor for his efforts and in 1865 was

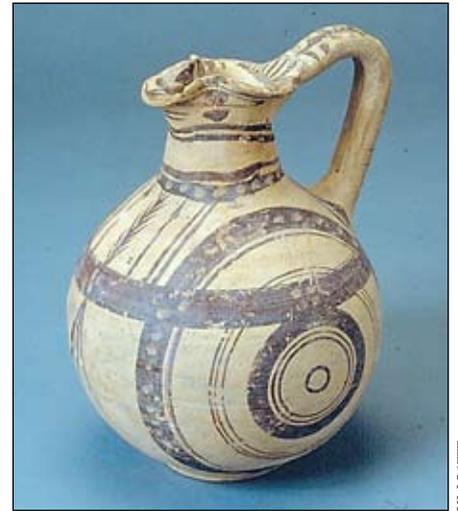
appointed—by President Abraham Lincoln—as American consul to Cyprus. On Christmas day of that year, Cesnola and his American wife arrived in the seaside town of Larnaca, where he would serve as consul until 1877.

It did not take long for Cesnola to become intrigued by the island's largely unexplored ancient remains, and over the years he would spearhead what Stuart Swiny, a well-known Cypriot scholar, has called "the most productive, and lucrative, treasure hunts in the annals of antiquarianism." Between 1865 and 1877, Cesnola launched hundreds of archaeological projects, unearthing thousands of artifacts and works of art. According to his own accounts, which are highly suspect, he excavated 118 sites, including 15 sanctuaries, 28 cities, and nearly 61,000 tombs.

Unfortunately, Cesnola's archaeological techniques were anything but careful; rarely present at his excavations, he took few notes or photographs of the objects' contexts and, on occasion, fabricated stories about the sites and their contents. His skills lay elsewhere, particularly as a master marketer. Cesnola began promoting his discoveries at auctions in Europe and between 1873 and 1896 sold over 35,000 objects of Cypriot antiquities, which he removed from the island through devious means. At one point, Ottoman authorities, who were ruling Cyprus at the time, heard of his intention to ship material to the United States, and they prohibited its export. Not one to be daunted, Cesnola quickly loaded his precious cargo onto a number of ships. But the boats hit rough seas, many objects were damaged, and at least 5,000 objects allegedly sank in a shipwreck.

Many of Cesnola's excavated objects would ultimately be purchased by the newly formed Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. In 1879 Cesnola became the museum's first director—a position he held until his death in 1904—and for years the "Cesnola Collection" filled the main floors of that museum. A man of great presence, Cesnola was known to strut around the halls of the Met, and it is alleged that on one occasion he locked one of his curators out of his office—they had disagreed on the authentication of a vase—until the man resigned!

As the Metropolitan's collections grew, pieces of the Cesnola Collection were deaccessioned and sold to make room for new acquisitions. Today Cesnola pieces



Cypriot clay oinochoe, 750–500 BCE, from the Kelsey "Cesnola Collection."

can be found at the Louvre, the British Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and in university museums at Stanford and Harvard, to name just a few.

In 1928, 206 items of the "Cesnola Collection" that had come up for auction were purchased and presented to the College of Architecture at the University of Michigan. In 1960, the entire collection was transferred to the Kelsey Museum. Rarely displayed at the Museum, the collection contains some good examples of Cypriot antiquities. These include more than 100 clay vessels; 10 miniature pots, which may have served as toys or votive offerings; approximately 30 glass containers; 30 clay figurines or parts of sculpture; 3 silver armlets or bracelets; and about 15 stone sculptures, several of which represent finely carved heads from larger pieces that were found at Golgoi, an important sanctuary and necropolis on the island. The dates of the pieces span from the Early Bronze Age of Cyprus (ca. 2300 BCE) to the Roman period (330 CE), thus reflecting a long stretch of the island's history.

Although Cesnola's archaeological techniques are to be criticized (even in the context of archaeology's early formative years), as is his spirited masses of objects out of Cyprus, he did much to turn the world's attention toward the extraordinary archaeology of this unusual island. The objects that will be on display in the new wing give us a chance not only to highlight Cyprus but to ask visitors to contemplate the early history and ethics of archaeology and collecting.

Lauren Talalay

## Pedley Winner Explores Evidence for the Earliest Neolithic Life on Cyprus

This summer the John Griffiths Pedley Travel and Research Fund Endowment generously supported my participation in an archaeological project with which I've been involved for several years. Officially we are Elaborating Early Neolithic Cyprus, but like most projects we usually go by an acronym: EENC.

What is the Neolithic, and why does it need elaborating? Broadly defined, the Neolithic in Southwest Asia was a period during which people found themselves no longer able to meet most of their subsistence needs by hunting and gathering and instead came to depend on newly domesticated plants and animals, especially wheat, barley, sheep, goats, and pigs. On Cyprus, Neolithic farming villages at sites like Khirokitia and Kalavassos *Tenta* are well known, but until very recently the earliest phase of the Neolithic was known only from the evidence of diagnostic chipped stone tools and a handful of early radiocarbon dates.

The first season of EENC, in 2005, used surface survey to identify sites with artifacts belonging to this earlier phase of the Neolithic. The site of Ayia Varvara-Asprokremnos, located in a field of barley between two low hills overlooking the Yialias river valley, was the most promising candidate for excavation. We began digging there in the summer of 2006 and found impressive numbers of chert blades and tools; ground stone artifacts, many of which would have been used to process plant foods; and a decorated stone with a deep groove that may have been used to shape the shafts of arrows: similar ar-

tifacts were known from the mainland, but this was the first to be found on Cyprus. Based on these and other data, we were able to infer that the people who left the artifacts at Asprokremnos lived very differently from the later farmers of Khirokitia and Tenta. But we were left wondering whether the site had any structures—fire pits, for example, in which charred food remains might be preserved and which might, with luck, yield radiocarbon dates.

We had high hopes and expectations for the 2007 season. Our team of excavators would be joined by dendrochronologists from Cornell University, who would sample standing trees and wood from artifacts and old buildings in order to establish a tree ring sequence for Cyprus. To accommodate the expanded team, the directors of EENC rented a beautiful old courtyard house in the village of Pera Orinis. Not everything went smoothly at first: most of our equipment disappeared from storage, the house leaked during unseasonable thunderstorms, there were floods and car crashes, and the site was endangered by marauding goats. But we persevered: we borrowed theodolites and shovels, put pots and pans under drips, chased off the goats, and opened several new trenches. These yielded not only more chipped stone but ancient stake holes, perhaps for temporary structures, the remnants of fires, and animal bone. By the time of the annual Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI) workshop, which brings together many of the archaeologists working on Cyprus, we were also able to

report significant progress, including the discovery of a second shaft straightener.

As every archaeologist knows, when the digging wraps up, the work is only beginning. At the end of the excavation there was a backlog of chert that had to be washed, boxed, and studied, and the borrowed equipment had to be sorted and returned to its rightful owners. I spent hours on the unglamorous task of drawing the ground stone. Most of the EENC team left Cyprus, but a few of us stayed on to do more survey work, and even as an August heat wave drove Cypriots indoors, we wandered across hillsides and farmers' fields in the sun looking for scatters of artifacts. In addition to recording sites and chert sources, we were able to form a better idea of the factors that led early Neolithic people to stop where they did: altitude, views, proximity to water and sources of tool-making stone.

After the conclusion of the survey, I spent two weeks at CAARI in busy Lefkosia, which provides a comfortable home base for scholars of all nationalities. Here I was able to do a lot of work on my dissertation, which deals with changes in the way people used the landscape in early prehistoric Cyprus.

EENC is directed by Sturt Manning of Cornell University, Carole McCartney of the University of Cyprus, and Sally Stewart of the University of Toronto, under the auspices of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus. I wish to thank the directors and staff of EENC, Tom Davis, Vathoulla Moustoukki and Diana Constantinides at CAARI, and John Pedley.

*Seth Button, IPCAA student*



At the early Neolithic site of Ayia Varvara-Asprokremnos Rachel Kulick, an undergraduate from Cornell University, excavates features interpreted as fire pits.



The author makes a new friend while on survey near Politico-Troullia.

# Construction Update on the Museum's New Upjohn Wing



Photo: S. Encina

1. View of first floor before the floor is poured.



Photo: S. Encina

2. View of first floor after the floor and columns have been poured.



Photo: S. Encina

3. View of first and second floors before the roof goes on.



Photo: S. Encina

4. View of south side of building after the walls and roof have been added.



Photo: S. Encina

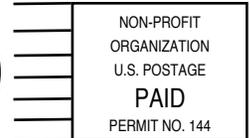
5. View of roof.



Photo: S. Encina

6. Curators Lauren Talalay (left) and Elaine Gazda view first-floor gallery.

THE  
KELSEY  
MUSEUM  
*of*  
ARCHAEOLOGY



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## The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology

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Sharon Herbert, *Greek and Hellenistic*

Janet Richards, *Dynastic Egypt*

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**Closed to the public until 2009**

### World Wide Web Address

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/kelsey/>



*The Kelsey support staff enjoys the LS&A Staff Spring Fling held in May. Front row left to right: Former Gifts Manager Michelle Biggs, Conservator Suzanne Davis, Coordinator of Museum Visitor Programs Todd Gerring, Conservator Claudia Chemello, Collections Manager Michelle Fontenot, Secretary Sandra Malveaux, Assistant Registrar Kate Carras; back row left to right: Coordinator of Museum Collections Sebastián Encina, Museum Exhibition Coordinator Scott Meier, Museum Administrator Helen Baker, and LSA Information Technology Student Assistant Anthony Williams.*

*Not pictured: Beau David Case, Field Librarian; Margaret Lourie, Editor; Jackie Monk, Assistant Financial Manager; Lorene Sterner, Graphic Artist; Alex Zwinak, Student Services Assistant.*

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