

CONSERVATION INTERN

The Kelsey Museum is pleased to welcome Brittany Dolph, who will be undertaking a nine-month graduate internship with the conservation lab. Brittany is currently a third-year graduate student of the University of California Los Angeles/Getty Master's Program in Conservation of Archaeological and Ethnographic Materials. Her Bachelor of Arts degree is from the State University of New York at Buffalo, where she majored in archaeology and psychology.

Brittany brings diverse conservation experience to the Kelsey. At the National Museum of American History she helped to prepare the Star Spangled Banner for exhibition. At the National Gallery of Art she assisted with conservation treatments in the museum's sculpture garden. In Greece, at the Theater of Demetrias, she worked on preservation of sandstone amphitheater seats, as well as on objects at the Athanasakeion Archaeological Museum in Volos. At the Methone Archaeological Project, also in Greece, she conserved metal artifacts and carried out technical analysis of glass beads.

Brittany has a special interest in the conservation of archaeological materials, particularly stone. Her thesis research at UCLA/Getty has focused on developing injectable grouts for use on weathered volcanic stone. While at the Kelsey, she will continue treatment of the Museum's collection of limestone stelae from Terenouthis and will gain further experience with organic and composite artifacts. Brittany will also assist with conservation of objects for the exhibition *Life in Miniature: Identity and Display at Ancient Seleucia-on-the-Tigris*, which opens December 20, 2013.

Please join us in welcoming Brittany!
Suzanne Davis



Brittany Dolph works to preserve limestone seats at the Theater of Demetrias in Greece.



Conservation research team at Abydos, left to right: Claudia Chemello, Ahmed Abdel-Azeem, Rae Beaubien, Robert Blanchette, Pamela Hatchfield, Suzanne Davis, Gregory Smith.

SYMPOSIUM ON ABYDOS CONSERVATION

In September the Kelsey Museum hosted the special symposium "Discovery! Conservation and Science in Action at Abydos, Egypt." The meeting brought together a group of scientists and conservators who have recently been working to develop better conservation protocols for severely degraded wood.

The Abydos Middle Cemetery is a fascinating place to work, and artifacts excavated there present unique conservation challenges. In fact, if there were a reality show titled "Conservation Nightmares," we'd put money on Abydos to win. Our most difficult preservation challenge at the site concerns wood artifacts. In most archaeological contexts wood does not survive, but Egypt is different; dry desert conditions often lead to excellent preservation of organic materials like wood. The Abydos wood, unfortunately, has not been so lucky. At Abydos, wood artifacts like coffins and figurines have suffered from attack by termites and fungi, and the remaining "wood" has the structural coherence of a very dry, very crumbly brownie. In other words, the artifacts fall apart once they're touched. They cannot even be lifted out of the ground without extra support. However, the surfaces of these artifacts are often well-preserved, resulting in a beautifully painted, egg-shell thin layer of paint and wood in the shape of the original artifact. And often these artifacts have unexpected and important stories to tell.

Because there are currently no guidelines for conservation of wood that is so severely degraded, we assembled a small

think-tank of conservators and scientists, each of whom brought specialized expertise to the project. This group included: Dr. Ahmed Abdel-Azeem, a mycologist from Suez Canal University; Dr. Robert Blanchette, a plant pathologist and microbiologist from the University of Minneapolis; Harriet "Rae" Beaubien, an expert in the excavation of fragile organic material from the Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute; Pamela Hatchfield, a conservator with extensive experience in conservation of Egyptian painted word artifacts; and Dr. Gregory Smith, the senior conservation research scientist at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Our research was funded by a grant from the American Research Center in Egypt and the United States Agency for International Development. The team visited Abydos for a week, conducting scientific analysis and testing excavation and conservation techniques on site. We also traveled to other sites and conservation labs in Egypt where conservation of archaeological wood is being conducted.

After several months to read, think, write, and come up with new ideas, we met again in Ann Arbor to discuss our findings and recommendations. As part of this meeting, the group gave a public lightning-round-style presentation about the project. You can learn more about our work by visiting the *Discovery! Excavating the Ancient World* exhibition, where several panels explore this research and its contributions to understanding ancient Abydos.

Suzanne Davis and Claudia Chemello



Photo: R. Dimilner

An undergraduate in ACABS 277 uses a magnifier to get a better look at the images on an ancient vessel.

KELSEY PARTICIPATES IN TLTC GRANT

Thanks to a provost's TLTC (Transforming Learning for a Third Century) grant, study of the Kelsey collections will be integrated into the curriculum of a large undergraduate class, ACABS (Ancient Civilizations and Biblical Studies) 277, "The Land of Israel/Palestine through the Ages." Professor Yaron Eliav of the Near Eastern Studies Department conceived the project after teaching ACABS 277 each winter for the past ten years to over 150 students. In his work with students both at Michigan and in Israel he has observed the power of handling the actual antiquities to connect students with the past.

KELSEY ASSOCIATES BOARD CONTINUES TO DEVELOP NEW MEMBER BENEFITS

Over the past year the Kelsey Board of Associates worked diligently to revise the organization's bylaws. The new bylaws were approved by the Associates at their May meeting and are available on the Kelsey website. In addition, new procedures were implemented for Board recruitment, orientation, and governance. The Board also welcomed three new Board members: Mary Heumann, Bill Kryska, and Emma Sachs. Their profiles are included in the new section on the Kelsey website for Associates. Visitors to the site can also learn about recent Associate and Board projects, upcoming events, and educational offerings exclusively for members.

Kelsey Associates are essential for support of educational programs and exhibitions, and we are always exploring new opportunities for engagement with the collections, exhibitions, and current archaeological research. In addition to our

Yaron recruited Sharon Herbert to coordinate the Kelsey side of the project, which will bring students in teams of four into the museum to study and report on selected objects from our collections. Meanwhile, a third member of the team, Julie Evershed, director of the Learning Resources Center, is overseeing the production of digital images of the objects and the production of a video on the Kelsey, which will appear on the course website and possibly, in a longer version, on the Kelsey website. Justin Winger, a recent PhD in Near Eastern Studies, has a postdoctoral fellowship funded by the TLTC grant to integrate the TLTC innovations

successful Behind-the-Scenes program, the Kelsey is also offering exhibition previews for members and will be introducing more opportunities for international travel with Kelsey faculty and research affiliates. We will also continue to offer regional trips to cultural institutions, enhanced by unique experiences with their faculty and staff. A number of Associates enjoyed recent trips to the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Eli and Edythe Broad Museum at Michigan State University. Upcoming travel is being coordinated for museums in Chicago and in the spring for museums in London, Paris, and Berlin.

As we acknowledge the significant relationship that members have with an institution, the Kelsey wants to learn more about what programs would interest Associates. This summer the Membership Committee of the Board of Associates worked on developing a member survey,

into the existing ACABS 277 course.

Sharon and Yaron, with the help of Coordinator of Museum Collections Sebastián Encina, went through the Kelsey collections this summer and selected twenty-five objects either from or related to ancient Israel/Palestine. The material available for study has been greatly augmented by the generous loan of thirty objects from the collection of Lawrence and Eleanor Jackier of West Bloomfield Hills. Early this October Justin, Yaron, and Kelsey Collections Manager Michelle Fontenot will travel to the Jackiers' home to pack the objects and transport them safely to the Kelsey.

This exciting new project will bring a whole new audience to the Kelsey and demonstrate the value of our collections for undergraduate education. The video and other digitized images will add greatly to the documentation and publication of our hidden treasures.

Sharon Herbert

and in the coming months we will be soliciting your ideas and suggestions.

We look forward to seeing you at the Museum this year and appreciate your participation and ongoing support. For information on becoming an Associate of the Kelsey Museum or increasing your involvement by joining the Board of Associates, please contact Dawn Johnson 734.764.9295 or dawnlynn@umich.edu, or visit the Associates page of our website.

UPCOMING ASSOCIATE EVENTS
Associates' Behind-the-Scenes Tour
Curator Terry Wilfong,
"From Djehutymose to Jackal Gods"
Thursday, November 7, 2013
6:00 pm, reception to follow

Kelsey Associates' Holiday Party
Friday, December 13, 2013

Dawn Johnson