



KMA KELSEY MUSEUM OF
ARCHAEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SPRING 2014 NEWS

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website: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/kelsey/>
phone: 734-764-9304
email: kelsey@umich.edu

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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

These notes come to you from the airport, as I wait to embark on the first leg of a journey that will take me by air from Detroit to Izmir on the west coast of Turkey, then by land from Izmir to the seaside site of Notion, a largely unexplored ancient Greek town. This summer will be the first season of a new Kelsey-sponsored archaeological project at Notion; our initial task will be to map the site using a variety of different techniques, including aerial photogrammetry, conventional surface mapping, and geophysical prospection. The start of a new field project is a great moment in the life of an archaeologist, and my colleagues and I are very excited and not a little nervous to see how things turn out. Stay tuned for a future newsletter!

It has been an exciting year in many ways at the Kelsey Museum. The Fall and Winter semesters saw two successful special exhibitions—“Discovery!,” highlighting current Kelsey-sponsored research projects, and “Life in Miniature,” featuring objects from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris in Iraq. Our current summer exhibition, “Ancient/Modern,” juxtaposes artifacts from the Kelsey collections with contemporary objects of similar form and/or function (see article on facing page by Collections Manager and Exhibition Curator, Sebastián Encina).

In addition to Notion in Turkey, another new Kelsey-sponsored field project was launched at Olynthos in Greece (the Michigan team is being led by Classics Professor and Kelsey Research Associate Lisa Nevett), and fieldwork continues at El Kurru in Sudan (see article on pages 4–5 by Project Director and Kelsey Research Scientist, Geoff Emberling), and at Rome (Sant’Omobono) and Gabii in Italy (under the direction of Classics Professor and Kelsey Research Associate Nicola Terrenato).

Collections research by Curator for Graeco-Roman Egypt Terry Wilfong has borne fruit in the form of a monograph on what is surely the Museum’s most popular single object: the coffin of the seventh- or sixth-century BC Egyptian priest Djehutymose, and the forthcoming publication of *Karanis Revealed: Discovering the Past and Present of a Michigan Excavation in Egypt*.

On the teaching front, an important new initiative was the incorporation of the Kelsey collections into the curriculum of a popular course on the history of ancient Israel/Palestine, taught by Professor Yarion Eliav of the Department of Near Eastern Studies. A major focus of the course was an essay competition, for which students wrote research papers on objects from the collection of Eleanor and Lawrence Jackier, which the Jackiers have pledged to the Kelsey Museum. The course culminated in a small exhibition of objects from the Jackier collection and a prize ceremony, attended by the Jackiers in April. We hope to have similar Jackier prize competitions in future years.

As director, much of my time this year has been taken up by work on a “self-study” in preparation for an academic review of the Kelsey Museum scheduled for next October (all units in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts are reviewed about once a decade—although it has been nearly twenty years since the Kelsey’s last review). This exercise has provided an occasion to reexamine the history and mission of the Museum, and it has made me more aware than ever of the many assets that make the Kelsey such a unique and dynamic institution: our academic setting; our standing as the only full-service Museum in the western hemisphere devoted solely to Classical and Near Eastern archaeology; our multi-talented academic, professional, administrative, and support staff; and last but not least, the support and hard work of our members, especially the docents, who do so much to help the Kelsey maintain its busy schedule of exhibitions, teaching and research projects, and public programs. All in all, it has been a rich and rewarding year!

Christopher Ratté, Director



The large clay figurine from ancient Seleucia (KM 16117) at left resembles a modern-day doll but probably served a very different function, while the ancient ceramic kylix (KM 23502) above looks decidedly unlike a modern wine goblet although it served the same function.

“ANCIENT/MODERN” RUNS JUNE 27–SEPTEMBER 7

“We have one just like that!” visitors often exclaim when they see some of the Kelsey’s objects hidden in collections storage. Their words always refer to items that are thousands of years old yet recognizable because of their likeness to modern counterparts.

One of the Kelsey’s strengths is its vast collection of everyday objects from ancient times. Many of these artifacts come from household contexts. And in many cases, what inhabitants of Roman Egypt, for example, used to accomplish their daily tasks is quite similar to how we fulfill the same needs thousands of years later.

The exhibition “Ancient/Modern: The Design of Everyday Things,” opening June 27, explores these connections between the peoples of the past and modern-day society. Throughout the exhibition visitors will encounter examples of similarities in tool design. How we prepare our food, filter water, or even entertain ourselves descends in a direct lineage from the past. The objects found in our kitchens, sheds, offices are not just products of a post-Industrial Revolution era.

Similarities often occur not only in the forms of objects but also in iconography. The coins we carry in the United States all have a common design: a president’s profile usually appears on the obverse (heads) and a symbol of power on the reverse (tails). Modern coins emulate those from ancient Greece and Rome, which featured monarchs and emperors. On the reverse were symbols of power or pride: compare the lighthouses that adorn both a coin from ancient Alexandria and the 2003 state of Maine commemorative quarter.

The exhibition also explores our differences from ancient peoples. Some items on display touch upon how varied the solutions to everyday tasks can be. Form

does not inevitably follow function. A Karanis broom may be indistinguishable from a modern example, yet the Greek kylix and the modern wine goblet both serve the same function, despite their distinct differences in form. Drinking wine from a kylix may seem as strange to us as does the fact that Greeks and Romans reclined on couches at formal dinner parties.

Elsewhere in the exhibition, we see other examples of tools that serve the same function but through different forms. The modern carpenter has power drills that can easily drill through wood. Faced with the same demand, the ancient carpenter could create many of the same shapes and decorations by using a bow drill. The bow drill may be more cumbersome to use, but a master craftsman could use it to make fine furniture, exquisite boxes, and sturdy architectural elements.

A third category of objects in “Ancient/Modern” shows forms that are similar, yet their functions might be starkly different. The large child figurine excavated at Seleucia looks to us like a doll, but, unlike an American Girl doll, it probably was not intended for play. Instead, the Seleucid “doll” may have been used for votive, ceremonial, or religious purposes. It was likely too fragile and awkward to be used as a plaything. Perhaps, with its arm reaching out to viewers, it was meant to be more a display piece than a toy.

“Ancient/Modern” brings all these artifacts together to encourage viewers to think about connections between our time and the past. In many cases, we share the same needs and often employ the same solutions as people in bygone eras. As Francis Kelsey, the Museum’s namesake, once asked, “where does the ancient stop and the modern begin?”

Sebastián Encina

NEW STAFF MEMBER

Once you know a little about Cathy Person’s background, it seems almost inevitable that she would be the Kelsey Museum’s new Educational and Academic Outreach Coordinator. Inspired by a high school Latin teacher, she decided to study classics. In college, an introductory archaeology course and another class that required working as a docent at an art museum further refined her interests.

So by the time Cathy started work on her PhD in Classical and Near Eastern archaeology at Bryn Mawr, she knew her goal was to work in an archaeology museum. More museum experience at the University of Pennsylvania Archaeology and Anthropology Museum confirmed this direction, and a stint in visitor services at the Philadelphia Museum of Art made it clear she wanted to work with the public.

Perhaps this exact fit between Cathy’s training and her new position helped her hit the ground running when she arrived in Ann Arbor in November. She very quickly began training IPCAA students to serve as Kelsey docents and will mount a regular class for volunteer docents in September. She organized an April family day that drew 167 participants. And she has assembled an ambitious roster of summer events, featuring several new series calculated to reach diverse audiences: special tours during Art Fair, Sunday drop-in tours led by Kelsey curators, gallery conversations with experts in fields related to the special exhibition, and a program called “Read and Look” for 4–6-year-olds. She also manages the Museum’s Facebook page and its weekly blog posting. Soon she hopes to update our popular Civilizations in a Crate and design some K-12 lesson plans.

It’s a pleasure to welcome Cathy Person to the Kelsey staff.





Fig. 1. Gateway in city wall.



Fig. 2. Christian period domestic architecture against city wall.



Fig. 3. Rooms 1 and 2 of mortuary temple.



Fig. 4. Room 3 with volute and palm capitals.

EXCAVATIONS AT EL KURRU, 2014

El Kurru in northern Sudan is well known as the site of a royal cemetery of Kush whose burials include kings who conquered and ruled Egypt as its 25th Dynasty (715–653 BC). The burials were excavated in 1918–1919 by the American archaeologist George Reisner, and he also noted elements of a settlement around this cemetery. A Kelsey Museum project returned to El Kurru in 2013 to investigate elements of this settlement, and we significantly expanded our work in 2014.

This season, we focused our excavation efforts on two of Reisner's structures: a mortuary temple and a city wall. We anticipated having structural problems excavating underground rooms in the mortuary temple, so we brought an architect who has designed support structures in rock-cut tombs in Egypt. This allowed us to begin excavating a royal pyramid at the site in which structural problems had prevented previous excavation. For more information and photos about the season, visit my blog: elkurrukush.blogspot.com.

We also hosted a National Geographic film crew during the season. Watch for their film, which should air on PBS in the late summer or early fall of 2014.

The team working at El Kurru during February and March included excavators Tim Skuldboel, Martin Uildriks, and Carola Stearns; photographer Kathryn Howley of Brown University, who took kite photographs that will eventually yield 3D digital maps; architect Ignacio Forcadell; artist and registrar Jack Cheng; and Kelsey conservator Suzanne Davis. We also continued a program of magnetometry survey with the help of Prof. Mohamed Abdelwahab of the University of Dongola-Wadi Halfa. We employed as many as 60 local workmen.

CITY WALL

This year we were able to clear a single stretch of 32 meters of the city wall that included a gateway found by Reisner (fig. 1). The wall is 2.15 meters wide, faced with shaped sandstone blocks enclosing a core of sandstone blocks and rubble. It is preserved about 1.0 meters high. The gateway included a piece of petrified wood used as a threshold, sockets perhaps for locking a gate, and two door socket stones at different levels, suggesting a history of rebuilding. It had two walls extending about 3 meters toward the river on either side of the gate, forming an unusual kind of portico, and two smaller extensions on the west (village) side.

We also excavated a sounding against the city wall (fig. 2) and found a domestic occupation with cooking pots left in place. The pottery is entirely classic Christian, dating to the eighth to eleventh century AD. After the house was built and fell out of use, it was used as a trash dump, and then as a cemetery.

It is noteworthy that although the diagnostic ceramics in the area are entirely Christian in date, the construction of the wall itself is more similar to Napatan and Meroitic construction than it is to Christian, at least in its use of shaped sandstone blocks. Some of the facing blocks are not finished, but chisel marks remain visible. It is of course possible that these were stones shaped in Napatan times for use in the cemetery and that the wall (or at least its facing) is largely built of blocks taken from the cemetery. Our preliminary geomorphological observations of this area suggest that it was prone to flooding and wash from a nearby wadi that may have removed traces of earlier settlement. The area along the wall farther to the north is

not affected in this way and may preserve traces of earlier settlement.

MORTUARY TEMPLE

In 2013 we began excavation of a structure identified by Reisner as a mortuary temple dedicated to worship of a deceased king. Our excavation of the temple this year entirely cleared two outer rooms, each 15 meters long, buried in over 2 meters of sediment. Room 1 (fig. 3, foreground) was entered by a staircase from the south and seems to have had few features or installations. Its northern wall of massive stone blocks (75 × 40 × 32 cm average size) was destroyed by an ancient wadi flood. Room 2 contained 26 columns and was originally roofed around the edges with a system of stone beams and perhaps palm branches. Some of the stone beams were preserved in the fill of the room.

The first underground chambers, Rooms 3 and 4, were decorated with columns and stone beams—the system seems to have been decorative rather than functional as there are gaps between the beams and the ceiling, and the beams are placed in a location that is not structurally weak. In Room 3 the columns had two different types of capitals—five volutes around one set, and palm branches around the other (fig. 4). In Room 4 all four columns had the same lotus capital. Both Rooms 3 and 4 were provided with a locking door (round holes at top and bottom to support a pivoting door, and a square slot for a bolt at the top of the door).

Straight back from Rooms 3 and 4 were Rooms 6 and 7, respectively. Each was a square room approximately 4 × 4 meters in size, and was also provided with a locking door mechanism (fig. 5).

The function of this structure and especially of its underground rooms remains something of a mystery, as is the

date of its construction, because virtually no portable objects were found in the lower levels of the fills. There are no inscriptions to date its initial construction and use. The complete absence of archaeological remains, combined with the evident concern with security, leads one to suspect that these were storerooms for valuable objects that were removed when the building was abandoned. Our best guess for the date of construction is fourth century BC (later Napatan).

KU. PYRAMID 1

The only well-preserved pyramid at El Kurru is Ku. 1 (fig. 6). It appears from its form to be considerably later in date than the other burials at the site, and this raises interesting questions about ancestral memory, powerful lineages among the Kushite elite, and the importance of El Kurru as a place within the political landscape of Kush.

Reisner cleared the corners of the pyramid to remove corner blocks and excavate the foundation deposits there, and he cleared out the chapel, which contained some incised blocks. He also excavated the massive, monumental descender (about 23 meters long, 2.5 meters wide, 8 meters deep at the doorway) and the first underground chamber (about 5 meters long and 4.5 meters wide), which he labeled Room A (and which he found completely empty). Reisner excavated a meter or two into the second room (Room B) and encountered a large structural flaw in the ceiling—a hole in the stone through which (he said) he could see the base of the pyramid. We began excavation with the expectation that our architect, Nacho Forcadell, would be able to build protective structures that would allow us to excavate to the back of Room B.

Our excavation has very largely therefore been a dirt-moving exercise. We

estimate that we removed roughly 250 tons of sand and silt from the staircase, Room A, and Room B. We found very few objects, apart from a scatter of Christian sherds in an upper layer in the fill of Room B, which were associated with large stones that may once have been a blocking for the inner chamber.

Our excavation revealed particularly interesting results in Room A (fig. 7), where careful excavation uncovered twelve postholes cut into the floor in three rows, perhaps to support a canopy over the king during a stage in the mortuary ritual.

The season was made possible by generous support from the National Geographic Society, the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project, and Ms. Kathleen Picken. As always, our thanks are due to our archaeological colleagues in the Sudanese antiquities department, the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums.

Geoff Emberling



Fig. 5. Doorway from Room 7 into Room 4.



Fig. 6. Ku. Pyramid 1.

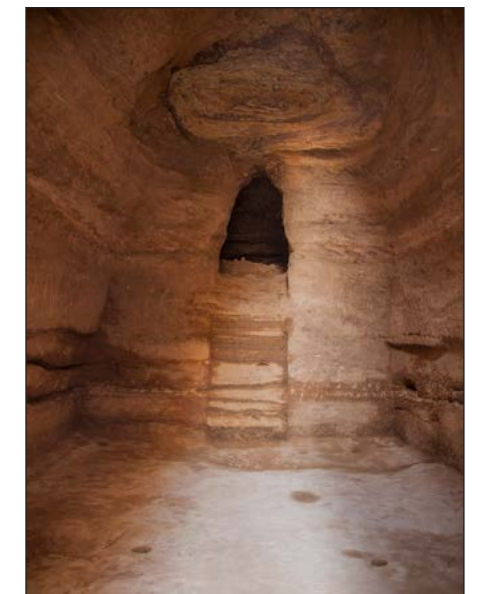


Fig. 7. Room A in Ku. Pyramid 1.



Margaret Root offers concluding remarks at the January AIA panel honoring her career. The panel, “The Art of Empire in Achaemenid Persia,” featured Pierre Briant (Collège de France), Rémy Bouchard (University of Lyons and French Archaeological Mission in Iran), and Christopher Tuplin (University of Liverpool) plus Alex Nagel (IPCAA 2010) and Henry Colburn (IPCAA 2014).

IPCAA KUDOS

Again this year IPCAA students have garnered numerous prestigious awards and fellowships for 2013–2014. **ANDREA BROCK** earned both a Rackham International Research Award and a Pedley Travel and Research Grant. **IVAN CANGEMI** received the Rome Prize of the American Academy in Rome as well as a Rackham International Research Award. **JENNY KREIGER** will be traveling to Italy on a Fulbright scholarship. **EMMA SACHS** was awarded a Bernard Bothmer Fellowship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. **ELINA SALMINEN** received a Pedley Travel and Research Grant.

Among recent IPCAA graduates, **THOMAS LANDVATTER**, PhD 2013, will take up a Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute postdoctoral fellowship. And **MARCELLO MOGETTA**, PhD 2013, received a postdoctoral fellowship at Freie University in Berlin.

STAFF UPDATE

Curator for Conservation **SUZANNE DAVIS** gave an invited presentation at the annual meeting of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) and chaired a session at the American Schools of Oriental Research meeting. She also published articles on the conservation of glass and on conservation outreach at the Kelsey Museum. She is a program chair for the 2014 meeting of AIC and is this year’s winner of AIC’s Advocacy Award.

The focus of Research Scientist **GEOFF EMBERLING**’s year has been the excavation season at El Kurru in northern Sudan, where his team excavated significant portions of a Napatan royal pyramid and mortuary temple (ca. 350 BC), as well as a city wall and settlement apparently of medieval Christian date (ca. AD 900). He also obtained major funding for the next four years of the project from the Qatar-Sudan Archaeological Project. For details, see his blog: elkurrukush.blogspot.com.

Hellenistic and Roman Curator **ELAINE GAZDA** will take up a Residency at the American Academy in Rome this May and June. While in Italy she plans to work on the villas of Oplontis exhibition, which opens at the Kelsey in 2016, as well as her book on Roman villas. In January she chaired a session on Roman domestic space at the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) meeting in Chicago.

Research Scientist **RICHARD REDDING** gave a talk on feeding pyramid builders at the January meeting of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities in Toronto. He delivered a paper at the April meetings of the American Research Center in Egypt in Portland, Oregon, and will make two presentations at the International Council of Archaeozoology meetings in San Rafael, Argentina, in September. He published a paper on Old Kingdom subsistence economy and the infrastructure of pyramid construction in the *Proceedings of the 10th Meeting of the ICAZ Working Group “Archaeozoology of southwest Asia and adjacent Areas.”* He is currently doing fieldwork at the Silo Building Complex at Giza.

Curator for Dynastic Egypt **JANET RICHARDS** curated the Kelsey exhibition “Discovery! Excavating the Ancient World” during Fall Term 2013. She is currently in residence at the American Academy in Berlin as Ellen Maria Gorrissen Fellow in the Humanities, where she is completing her book on political crisis in ancient Egypt. While there she delivered public lectures in Stuttgart, Berlin, and Basel.

Curator Emerita for Academic Outreach **LAUREN TALALAY** published “Drawing Conclusions: Greek Antiquity, the Economic Crisis, and Political Cartoons,” in the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*.

Curator for Graeco-Roman Egypt **TERRY WILFONG** was promoted to full Professor and Curator. He published “The Oracular Amuletic Decrees: A Question of Length,” in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, and his book *Life, Death, and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt: The Coffin of Djebutymose in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology* appeared in summer of 2013. His next book, *Karanis Revealed*, edited with Andrew W. S. Ferrara, will feature an overview of his 2011–2012 Kelsey Museum exhibition along with new essays about the material, and will appear in the summer of 2014. He gave an invited lecture, “A Misunderstood Egyptomaniac? Athanasius Kircher and the 17th Century Roots of Western Egyptomania” at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore in October. He is currently preparing an exhibition of the jackal gods of ancient Egypt, which will open at the Kelsey Museum in February 2015.

A special panel, “The Art of Empire in Achaemenid Persia,” honoring Greek and Near Eastern Curator **MARGARET ROOT** was convened at the AIA meetings by Beth Dusinberre (IPCAA 1997) and Mark Garrison (IPCAA 1988). At a party in her honor that evening Kelsey Director **CHRISTOPHER RATTÉ** toasted her achievements, while many IPCAA-ites and longtime archaeology friends of hers from around the world looked on. She is now working to make her next AIA-sponsored Iran tour (in May 2015) more affordable, especially for academics.

Interested in archaeology and enjoy working with people? The Kelsey Museum is recruiting volunteers for its fall Docent Training Class. After training, volunteer docents lead museum tours and assist with the museum’s many outreach programs. Classes begin in early September 2014 and continue through mid-May 2015. Contact Cathy Person (cperson@umich.edu; 734.647.0441).

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SPECIAL EXHIBITION

*Ancient/Modern: The Design of
Everyday Things*

June 27–September 7, 2014

RELATED EVENTS

Ancient, Modern, or Somewhere in Between?
lecture by Donna Braden, Curator of
Public Life, The Henry Ford Museum
Friday, June 27, 6:00 pm
Exhibition opening reception follows

Drop-in Tours

with exhibition curator Sebastián Encina
Sunday, June 22, 2:00 pm
Sunday, August 24, 2:00 pm

A Taste of the Mediterranean

with Vinology and Morgan & York
Thursday, June 19, 5:30–6:30 pm
Please preregister at 734.763.8639.

Sunday Gallery Conversations

July 20, 2:00 pm, with Professor Franc
Nunoo-Quarcco, Stamps School of Art
& Design
August 3, 2:00 pm, with Professor Carla
Sinopoli, Museum Studies Program and
Department of Anthropology

OTHER ACTIVITIES

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see the “Events” column on the Kelsey
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