Margaret Cool Root, Curator of Near Eastern and Greek collections and Professor of the History of Art, retired this summer after 37 years of service to the University of Michi- gan—long before initiating one more Kelsey exhibition, "Passionate Curiosities: Collecting in Egypt & the Near East 1890–1950", on display through November 19. I would like to devote my comments in this Newsletter to a brief glance back at Margaret’s distinguished career as a scholar, teacher, and museum curator.

Margaret is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College (BA 1969, PhD 1976). After one year of teaching at the University of Chicago, she joined the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1978. In addition to her contributions as Professor and Curator, she served as Acting Director of the Kelsey in 1992–1993 and 2004–2005, and as Chair of the Department of the History of Art from 1994 to 1999. As a scholar, Margaret is the rare colleague whose oeuvre includes both strikingly original research and sustained archival study. I first encountered her through her seminal first book, The King and Kinghip in Achaemenid Art (1979). I well remember reading and discussing it with passionate interest as a graduate student in Berkeley in the mid-1980s. Margaret’s other publications include more than 10 additional books and exhibition catalogues, as well as more than 50 articles and book chapters.

Margaret’s archival research blends with her teaching in her collaboration with Mark Garrison (IPCAA PhD, 1988), her former student, on the publication of the sale on the Persepolis fortification tablets. The first volume of what one reviewer described as “this enormous undertaking” appeared in 2001, and the other two volumes are eagerly awaited. Mark and many others form a loyal cadre of Margaret’s former students who have made significant contributions to Classical and Near Eastern archaeology and to American cultural life.

For Margaret as for the other curators at the Kelsey Museum, teaching and research come together in their work as stewards of the Museum’s past exhibitions and, especially in the special exhibitions they regularly mount. In Margaret’s case, these include exhibitions and exhibition catalogues not only on seals and other objects in which she has special expertise but also to a few portrait miniatures, Roman glass, and the U-M excavations at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris in Iraq.

Her current exhibition, "Passionate Curiosities", provides visitors with the opportunity to meet a number of the collectors donating to the Kelsey. The exhibition developed out of a collaborative book project by Margaret Root and Laurie Taltalay, former Associate Director of the Kelsey, which recounts the stories of collectors and collecting at the Kelsey from the late 19th century until the present and discusses how attitudes toward collecting have changed over that time. Laurie retired from the Museum in 2013, and it is a remarkable act of academic generosity on the part of both Margaret and Laurie to leave their younger colleagues and the public at large with this marvellous compendium of insider knowledge about the history of the museum and its collections.

One of the very successful aspects of the current exhibition is how clearly it evokes Margaret’s intellectual personality. Those of us who know Margaret recognize this inimitable combination of bookish erudition and whimsy; visitors who do not know Margaret will surely come away with a strong sense of the very distinctive intellectual presence—of a passionate and curious mind.

Christopher Ratti, Director

"NEW" ARCHIVAL FILM FOOTAGE FROM KARANIS

The silent movies from the University of Michigan 1924–1931 Expedition to Egypt continue to yield surprises: a new digitization of this vintage film uncovered an entire reel of uncatalogued footage, with new details from the excavations. At least four hours of silent film were shot by the Michigan crew in Egypt between 1918 and 1935, under the direction of photographer George Swain. There was clearly some kind of plan to turn this footage into a documentary, but the movie never came together, and the footage sat largely unused for decades. In preparation for Elaine Gazda’s landmark 1987 exhibition on Karanis, the silent film was transferred to video, from which a short collection of excerpts was made, along with a detailed log of the film’s contents. Most of what we knew about the films came from these videos and their log.

Information for 2011–2012 Karanis Restored exhibition, the Kelsey’s Museum Collections Manager Sebastian Excina supervised the digitization of the video masters, from which I cut the films into clips based on the old logs. Some of the clips were used on iPads in the exhibition and also feature on the exhibition website. In preparing clips for the exhibition, I researched both the films and their context; thanks to John Pedley’s biography of Francis Kelsey, I got a sense of Kelsey’s engagement with contemporaneous film culture and arrived at an idea of what the intentions might have been behind these films. I presented my ideas in a lecture for the Francis Kelsey exhibition, later excerpted for an article in the Karanis Restored book.

The quality of the digitized video was never great, and Sebastian went back to the films themselves for a new digitization project. The resulting digital films are much sharper and cleaner, yielding higher resolution than the old video transfers. Even better, the files also reveal a “lost” reel of footage—nearly an hour of film not previously transferred to video or catalogued.

Highlights from the “new” reel include more scenes of the Michigan crew in their camp, as well as travels to Medinet el-Fayyum, the modern capital of the region, and scenes of village life. In one sequence, the American Minster visits Cairo, leaving from the dig house with great ceremony. In another, the crew watch the Egyptian workers as they hold a celebration in the courtyard of the dig house—although it seems at least partly staged for the camera, we do get to see many of the workers we know from archival still photography and expeditions.

But the greatest surprises of the new footage center on ancient times. At a relatively brief sequence shows the nearby Fayum site of Philadelphia—a Graeco-Roman town excavated by a German team in the 1930s—and gives a sense of the amount of surviving standing architecture from this orthogonally laid-out community.

Of greater interest to us at Michigan is footage from the 1931 Michigan excavation of the cemetery site of Trenchotis (modern Kom Abou Billou) (fig. 1). Although a relatively uninformative sequence from the site was already known, the new footage shows some extraordinary scenes: the discovery of a late Roman burial, with a body encased in plaster, and footage of the earlier mudbrick cenotaphs from which the famous Trenchotis stelae were recovered. Perhaps even more surprising was the discovery of two sequences shot at Dimi, another Graeco-Roman townsite that Michigan excavated in 1931, as an adjunct to the Karanis excavation (fig. 2). The new Dimi footage seems to predate the excavation, perhaps shot in the leadup to Michigan’s work there. The views of Dimi, including sweeping pans of the temple there, are strongly reminiscent of the panoramic still photographs of the site taken by Swain.

The overall quality of the new digitization is generally superior to the older transfer from video. I am currently in the process of cutting the huge video files into manageable clips that will be made freely available online. I hoped to get through this quickly and post the results, but this task has proven much more complicated than I had imagined. It is not simply a matter of cutting up files because black slivers of film are scattered across the reels.

To give a simple example, there is a title “Surveying” on a red reel, but the footage that follows this title shows cameos and donkeys and has nothing to do with surveying. Research begins with a title: “The Sebakh Diggers” but is immediately followed by a brief sequence showing the digging team; I was able to follow this up by a brief sequence showing the archaeologists using surveying techniques for mapping a building. Thus the resultant “Surveying” sequence needs to be reconstructed from the two reels. Other sequences are spread over more reels, and odd snippets appear throughout the reels. I am using the original titling as much as possible to respect the original intentions behind the film, but it’s a complicated process to match related footage.

T. G. Wilfong, Curator
In February 2016, the Kelsey will open the largest show in its nearly ninety-year history. Entitled Leisure and Luxury in the Age of Nero: The Villas of Oplontis near Pompeii, this international loan exhibition will highlight two spectacular Roman archaeological sites—one an enormous luxury villa (“Villa B”) that once sprawled along the coast of the Bay of Naples just two miles from Pompeii (fig. 1), the other a nearby commercial-residential complex (“Villa A”) where products from the region were exported in quantity.

A gallery devoted to “Leisure and Luxury” will showcase a selection of extraordinary works of art—marble sculptures, wall paintings, and inlaid marble floors—that created an opulent setting for the owners of Villa A and the many guests they entertained. In contrast, humble objects of daily life—planting pots, mortar and pestle, and oil lamps—will provide a glimpse of the lives of the slaves whose work made possible the owner’s elite lifestyle.

A second gallery, devoted to “Commerce and Wealth,” will evoke both the commercial and domestic life of Villa B. Here the lucrative trade in wine and other products is represented by shipping jugs shown alongside a large, ornately ornamented strong box where proceeds of trade were most likely kept (fig. 2). A display of a collection of everyday domestic objects—brass, glass, and pottery vessels—will hint at the lives of the middle-class inhabitants of Villa B.

The tragic end of life there when Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD 79 along the coast of the Bay of Naples just two miles from Pompeii is marked by a large quantity of jewelry and coins during her final days. Focusing on one of the fifty-four skeletons of a pregnant woman who was carrying a large quantity of jewelry and coins, provides a sense of what this failed attempt to escape. A selection of objects from Oplontis near Pompeii, this international loan exhibition will highlight two spectacular Roman archaeological sites—one an enormous luxury villa (“Villa B”) that once sprawled along the coast of the Bay of Naples just two miles from Pompeii (fig. 1), the other a nearby commercial-residential complex (“Villa A”) where products from the region were exported in quantity.

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STUDY SEASONS IN GREECE
AND ROME

This summer the John G. Pedley Award for Travel and Research brought me home to the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome. I spent three weeks in June in the Greek region of Arcadia, participating in the fifth study season of the Mt. Lykaios Excavation and Survey Project. Between 2006 and 2010, the project undertook excavations in the mountaintop sanctuary of Zeus Lykaios in southwestern Arcadia. Every summer since then we have been studying the excavated materials in a storage and workspace, or apotheke, located in the city of Tripolis in eastern Arcadia. Tripolis is the most glamorous city in Greece, but it is not the most famous, and has a certain charm and fine bakeries.

In the apotheke I continued to assist with the study of materials from the Ash Vault of Zeus Lykaios, a University of Michigan-funded project. A storage vault in the sanctuary, the Ash Vault was used in the Greek period as a place of storage and possible ritual disposal, and now as an area of study for ceramicists. During the first season of my work here, my efforts were directed toward the analysis of ash from the 4th century BC temple and the feature layer that protects it. I was able to complete several months of the Ash Vault project, documenting the contents of the vault and analyzing the assemblage of ceramic and stone fragments.

In the third week of our season, the team explored a large area of the sanctuary with the help of a grant from the Pedley Fund. The site, known as the Sanctuary of the Dioskouroi, was first excavated in the 1930s and has remained largely unexplored. We were able to recover a large number of ceramic and stone fragments, including vases, pottery, and stone tools. The materials were carefully recorded and stored for future analysis.

We also spent a week in Rome, visiting museums and archaeological sites to gain a better understanding of the Roman period in Greece. This included visits to the Roman Forum, the Colosseum, and the National Museum of Roman Civilization. We had the opportunity to meet with other archaeologists and students, and to discuss our findings and research.

SUPERVISING THE FINDS LAB AT GABII

At Gabii, the excavations have been focused on the study of material culture and site formation. We worked on a variety of tasks, including the recognition and documentation of site boundaries, the excavation and cleaning of artifact assemblages, the recording of finds, and the organization of project materials. We also had the opportunity to work with other teams, including the administrative staff and the project leader, to ensure the smooth运行 of the project.

One of the most important tasks was the recording of finds, which included the identification and classification of artifacts, the documentation of their location and context, and the preparation of data for publication. We also had the opportunity to work on the project’s digital repository, mapping the site and creating digital models of the excavations.

This summer was an invaluable experience. I am grateful for the generous support of donors to the Pedley Fund, which enables graduate students such as myself to expand our learning beyond the classroom.

Alicia Rittershaus, IPCAA student

SUPERVISING AREA C AT GABII

Thanks to generous support from the John G. Pedley Award for Travel and Research, I participated in the University of Michigan’s Gabii Project this summer. Located 11 miles east of Rome along the Via Praenestina, the city of Gabii was occupied from at least the tenth century BC until its decline in the second and third centuries AD.

Importantly, after the city’s decline, the site of Gabii was never again substantially occupied or developed; furthermore, no major, stratigraphic excavation had taken place at Gabii before the Gabii Project’s inception in 2009. The site provides a diachronic view of the “birth” and “death” of Rome’s central neighbor and rival, one of central Italy’s first cities.

This was my sixth year working at Gabii, under the direction of Professor Nicola T. Terrenato, and my first year serving as an area supervisor. In this role, I oversaw the reopening of excavations within one city block at Gabii, Area C, first excavated between 2009 and 2011. While the first three years of excavation had revealed a late Republican/early Imperial (roughly second century BC to first century AD) industrial complex and an earlier Republican house, this season we began working beneath the floor levels of the house in order to understand what was happening within this city block before the second century BC. Our long-term goal is to connect the sequence in Area C, with its neighbor, Area D. Area D contains a series of habitations ranging from fifth century BC, the earliest habitation at Gabii, down to the Archaic period (sixth to fifth century BC). By connecting the activity in Area C with its predecessor in Area D, we will have a complete picture of various occupations from the tenth century BC down to the first century AD, something almost unheard of in central Italian archaeology. This summer my team moved toward our goal of understanding this sequence.

Alongside our excavations, teaching is a crucial component of what we do, training undergraduates in the nuances of archaeological excavation. As a supervisor, the summer was particularly rewarding for me as a teacher of young archaeologists, instructing and organizing a team of four staff archaeologists and sixteen undergraduate volunteers from the University of Michigan and other institutions. A sample of the topics covered includes the basics of tool use and stratigraphic excavation, the tricks of our digital, tablet-based recording system, the basics of using ARCGIS software on an archaeology project, and a smattering of random Roman archaeology.

I also conducted some of my own research, studying the textile-making tools that were excavated over the last seven seasons at Gabii. This assemblage is one of the largest from a settlement context in central Italy. As part of my research, I was able to use the University’s extensive collection of textile-making tools, as well as the University’s digital repository, to gain a better understanding of the textiles used at Gabii.

One of the most important tasks of my research was to identify and catalog the assemblage of textile-making tools. I used the University’s digital repository to create a database of the tools, and was able to share this database with fellow researchers and students. My research on these tools will also be presented at the 2016 Archaeological Institute of America’s Annual Meeting. This summer was a highly successful season, and I look forward to another great year at Gabii in 2016.

Troy Samuels, IPCAA student

PEDLEY WINNERS REPORT ON SUMMER EXPEDITIONS TO ITALY AND GREECE

Dan Diffendale at work in the apotheke at Tripolis, Greece.

1. Dan Diffendale at work in the apotheke at Tripolis, Greece.

2. At Gabii, Alissa Rittershaus demonstrates how to use the pedestrian polk-a-dot tool in the finds lab.

3. At Gabii, Troy Samuels gives a live lecture on textile-making tools.
SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS

Passionate Curiosities: Collecting in Egypt & the Near East, 1880s–1950s
August 28–November 29, 2015

Rocks, Paper, Memory: Wendy Artin’s Watercolor Paintings of Ancient Sculpture
Phase ii: September 25–October 25, 2015

PASSIONATE CURiosITIES EVENT
Film Screening
Al Mumia, or The Night of Counting Years
October 30, 2015, 7:00 pm
Rackham Amphitheater
Discussion follows with Near Eastern Studies Professor Carol Badenstein

ROCKS, PAPER, MEMORY EVENT
A Workshop on Wendy Artin’s Engagement with the Classical Past
October 21, 2015, 4:00 pm
U-M Museum of Art Multipurpose Room

GALLERY DROP-IN TOURS
October 11, 2015, 2:00 pm
November 8, 2015, 2:00 pm
December 13, 2015, 2:00 pm

FAMILY DAY
November 14, 2015, 12:30–3:30 pm

OTHER ACTIVITIES
See a complete list of Kelsey events at www.lsa.umich.edu/kelsey

Yes, I want to support the Kelsey Museum.

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CHOOSE YOUR GIFT
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OR
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Cha:\ted the 10th of each month
☐ $ ______ per month

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CHOOSE YOUR AREA TO SUPPORT

STEP THREE:
CHOOSE YOUR PAYMENT METHOD
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☐Credit Card: ☐ AMEX ☐ Discover ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA

Acct. # _______ _______ _______ _______
Exp. Date __________

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