NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

After six years on the job these are the last notes “from the director” I will write for a Kelsey Newsletter. Seeking inspiration I dug up my first effort in the spring of 1990. I wrote then, “After ten years as a curator at the Kelsey I thought I knew the Museum pretty well, but after just ten months in the Director’s office I know I can never learn enough. I find now, to both my chagrin and delight, that I feel much the same. I can never learn enough about or from the Kelsey Museum. Its spectacular collections and the exciting range of projects conceived by its staff and ever-expanding research associates and friends make the Kelsey a center of learning that is always offering new opportunities.

The articles in this Newsletter underscore the range of Kelsey activities—excavation reports from Italy to the ancient city, the current special exhibition, “Kelsey Contemporaries,” which brings practicing artists’ eyes to the interactions between thoughts and things in museum displays, and a comparison of Karamis as Professor Kelsey found it and as it appears today to a UCLA team of excavators. The aspects of her upcoming exhibition, “Discovery! Excavating the Ancient World,” that Janet Reibeside chose to highlight in this Newsletter all speak to archaeologists’ attempts to understand the culture of human exploitation on the natural environment in our constant search for food, whether from plants or animals by the use of fire. By how pre-scient Professor Kelsey was in his holistic research plan at Karamis. Some of the earliest publications from Karamis were written by Michigan biologists on the plant remains recovered and saved there, materials Classical archaeologists have only recently begun to study seriously.

In these valedictory notes I am drawn to reflect on the importance of museums such as the Kelsey, which preserve, study, and present the remains of past societies to our current communities. In our increasingly present-world the power of the past can be easily lost. Thinkers as diverse in time and place as William Faulkner and Confucius have reflected on the power of the past to inform the present and frame the future. Confucius writing in fifth-century BC China commended his followers to “Study the past if you would define the future.” Faulkner, writing Requiem for a Nun in twentieth-century Mississippi reflected, “The past is never even past.” It’s not even past.

The future is now upon us at the Kelsey. The dean has just announced the appointment of my successor as Director. I am pleased to tell you that it is Christopher Ratté, Professor of Classical Archaeology in the Departments of Classical Studies and History of Art. Chris has been a Research Associate with the Kelsey since his arrival at the University of Michigan pretty well, but after just ten months in the Director’s office I know I can never learn enough. I can never learn enough about or from the Kelsey Museum. Its spectacular collections and the exciting range of projects conceived by its staff and ever-expanding research associates and friends make the Kelsey a center of learning that is always offering new opportunities.

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As we welcome Chris, we are also building a bond of far-sighted to Lauri Taladay (see page 6), who has enriched our programs in countless ways for so many years. In closing, I bring your attention to one last special exhibition that will open under my directorship. Titled “Red Rock & Rust Belt,” it is a display of photographs by Susan Webb juxtaposing the evocative ruins of ancient Petra with the Nietzschean-built landscape of contemporary Detroit, yet another exemplar of past and present interacting with us. I hope to see many of you there on June 30 to thank you in person for your support and enthusiasm for all things Kelsey over the years.

Sharon Herbert, Director

KELSEY CONTEMPORARIES

Since the Upjohn Exhibit Wing opened, the Kelsey Museum has been working with contemporary artists from the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design. Our current exhibition, “Kelsey Contemporaries: Kayla Romberger and Alisha Wesler,” is the latest in our ongoing series in which artists engage with the Kelsey Museum collections, installations, structures, and display strategies.

The first two exhibitions in this series were “Reem Gabriel: Personae” (2010) and John Kannenberg: Hours of Infin- ity” (2012). For her installation, artist Reem Gabriel drew on the forms of amphorae—the two-handled pottery jars so common in the ancient Mediterranean world that are displayed throughout the Kelsey’s permanent installation. For the artist, the forms of these jars evoke the human figure and notions of loss and suffering. Reem re-created and displayed amphorae of her own using a special process whereby the amphora slowly disintegrated over the duration of the exhibition, evoking the passage of time and the fragility of human existence. Artist John Kannenberg concentrated his research on the sonic experience of museums and human experience of the infinite; his resulting project, “Hours of Infinity,” used performance, video, sound, movement, duration, gravity, and drawing to explore both of these major themes. In addition to installations of drawings at both the Kelsey Museum and the Work Gallery, Kannenberg’s project culminated in the exhibition “An Hour of Infinity,” a live performance of drawing in the Kelsey galleries, accompanied by audio installations and musical improvisation by K. Barr. For one hour the Kelsey was transformed by this process of time and infinity in the context of the artifacts and galleries of the museum.

The present installment in this series features the multimedia work of two Master of Fine Arts students from the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design. One contemporary artist, Kayla Romberger, and Alisha Wesler, have developed a performance project in which they investigate the role of objects in the archaeological museum. For the artist, the forms of these jars evoke the human figure and notions of loss and suffering. Reem re-created and displayed amphorae of her own using a special process whereby the amphora slowly disintegrated over the duration of the exhibition, evoking the passage of time and the fragility of human existence. Artist John Kannenberg concentrated his research on the sonic experience of museums and human experience of the infinite; his resulting project, “Hours of Infinity,” used performance, video, sound, movement, duration, gravity, and drawing to explore both of these major themes. In addition to installations of drawings at both the Kelsey Museum and the Work Gallery, Kannenberg’s project culminated in the exhibition “An Hour of Infinity,” a live performance of drawing in the Kelsey galleries, accompanied by audio installations and musical improvisation by K. Barr. For one hour the Kelsey was transformed by this process of time and infinity in the context of the artifacts and galleries of the museum.

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NEW LIGHT ON THE “BLACK PHARAOHS” OF ANCIENT NUBIA

A new Kelsey Museum field project began this winter in northern Sudan (ancient Nubia). The expedition aims to investi- gate the Napatan Dynasty, which arose in the years around 800 BC and conquered Egypt, ruling there as the 25th Dynasty until being driven out of Egypt by the invading Assyrian army before 650 BC. Napatan kings continued to rule Nubia for centuries, eventually moving their capital upstream (southeast) to the city of Meroe, where their descendants retained control until after AD 300.

The Kelsey project is focused on the site of El Kurru, located in northern Sudan about 10 miles southwest of the famous ancient site of Gebel Barkal and of the modern city of Karima. El Kurru was the site of the first royal pyramids in Nubia and was the burial place of most of the Napatan kings who ruled Egypt. The cemetery had been excavated by George Reisner on behalf of Harvard University and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1918-19. Although the tombs had all been robbed in antiquity, Reisner recovered enough material to reconstruct a sequence of burials beginning with Napatan-style tombs (round mounds of stone), continuing with development of enclosure walls, and ending in pyramids of kings and queens whose names were preserved within the tombs. Many of the objects Reisner found are now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reisner also briefly excavated remains of a settlement adjacent to the cemetery. A 1996 publication by Tim Kendall showed some of the remains Reisner identified, including a section of city wall more than 200 meters long that then included a massive double gateway, a monumental rock-cut well with stairs around its outer edge, and another section of city wall.

When I visited the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston to review Reisner’s field records, I found that he had also located two structures that he called temples. Reisner never published these finds, and his notebook sketches and descriptions of structures were incomplete, which made it difficult to figure out where they might be located and what other settlement remains might be around them.

Excavation of the settlement Reisner located at El Kurru could illuminate some of the transformations that took place in Nubia with the rise of the Napatan Dynasty. We know that in addition to pyramid burial, Napatan kings began writing in Egyptian hieroglyphs and also adopted Egyptian gods, including Amun. Why did they do this? Where did the Napatan Dynasty come from? What was the basis of their political authority? What about their local economy and longer-distance exchange? And when did they actually begin to control the region?

There are significant disagreements about the chronological development of the Napatan Dynasty, with some scholars putting the first kings buried at Kurru in the 19th century BC, while others extend the ruling line back to the 11th century. This is more than a sterile debate about chronology; as an earlier date would make for a more direct connection between the collapse of the Egyptian New Kingdom control of Nubia and the rise of the Napatan Dynasty.

Thus, I organized a small first season that would attempt to relocate Reisner’s settlement remains and to evaluate other areas that could be useful for excavation. While this might have been simple in some areas of the world, the ancient settlement at Kurru was not clearly visible in the village today. So we planned to use a variety of methods, including geophysical survey (magnetometry and resistivity), analysis of satellite imagery, detailed topographic survey, and a program of geological coring that we hoped would identify areas of ancient settlement.

2013 SEASON

Using all these methods, supplemented by the knowledge of people living in Kurru village, we were able to relocate four of the five features identified by Reisner (fig. 1). Proceeding from the Nile bank, the first construction we relocated was Reisner’s city wall. It turned out to be a solidly built stone wall, 2.4 meters in width and preserved at least a meter high. We recovered several short stretches of the wall, and they appear to line up. The material associated with the wall was mainly Christian in date, rather than the Napatan occupation we had expected, but it was all found in an ash dump against the outer face of the wall and may reflect occupation later than the initial construction of the wall (figs. 2–3).

On a rock outcrop farther from the Nile, we relocated Reisner’s “palace well”—a 6 x 4-meter rectangular cut into the rock that Reisner said was 5 meters deep (we didn’t excavate that deep this season). It was located within the courtyard of a house in the village, but they graciously allowed us to excavate so long as we refilled the excavation and rebuilt their wall when we were done. Even more impressive was the staircase around the edge of the well, which reached nearly 5 meters in depth and turned into a tunnel descending down through the rock. As our excavation of this structure primarily went through areas previously excavated by Reisner, we did not recover any clear evidence for its date (figs. 4–5). We also found two of the buildings Reisner called mortuary temples that might have been connected to pyramids in the cemetery. One of these structures was modest in size and may turn out not to be a temple at all.

The other, however, was almost certainly a mortuary temple connected with the largest and latest pyramid in the royal cemetery, and was extraordinarily well preserved, with stone columns nearly 3 meters high. Even more extraordinary, two doorways cut into the rocky hillside led to rooms that were entirely underground. We were not able to excavate these rooms completely this season, in part because of safety concerns as the stone overhead was cracked and seemed ready to cave in (fig. 6).

SUMMARY AND PROSPECTS

We were able to relocate many of the structures Reisner found and to get a sense of their scale and state of preservation. We can now plan to excavate them fully in the seasons to come. The city wall was associated with smaller-scale mudbrick architecture inside, and careful excavation of those smaller structures will be extremely important for understanding the development of the settlement. The mortuary temple will be a major monument of Napatan architectural history, and our excavation there will be complemented by preservation and restoration for visitors over the years to come.

It is a pleasure to thank those who helped make the season such a success, beginning with everyone at the Kelsey Museum who provided administrative and moral support. The field team included Murtada Bushara and Mahmod Suliman Bashir, our Sudanese government inspectors; a Sudanese geophysics team led by Prof. Mohamed Adel Wahab of the Uni- versity of Dongola-Wadi Halfa, Prof. Tim Skulbboel of the University of Copenhagen, who carried out the coring program, and Dr. Jack Cheng, who documented the excavation in photos, video, and drawings.

The project was funded by the National Geographic Society and by a generous gift to the Kelsey from Kitty Picken. Work on the Kurru settle- ment is part of a broader project to investigate, restore, and present Kurru to visitors. Professor Abbas Sidahmed Zarringueh (University of Dongola at Karima) will work to protect and restore the royal cemetery, while Pro- fessor Rachael Dunn (University of Co- penhagen) will investigate the cemetery area for further burials, potentially both royal and non-royal, and possibly as- sociated structures.

Geoff Emberling, Excavation Director

Fig. 1. Topographic plan of work at El Kurru, 2013.
Fig. 2. Possible city wall.
Fig. 3. Painted Classic Christian shrub (ca. AD 1000) from ash dump near possible city wall.
Fig. 4. Plan of the rock-cut well with staircase.
Fig. 5. The staircase of the rock-cut well.
Fig. 6. The large mortuary temple at El Kurru.
PARTING THOUGHTS
FROM LAUREN TALALAY

For more than a quarter of a century I have called the Kelsey my “second home.” Throughout those years, there was no such thing as a boring day or an uninteresting challenge, and the accumulated detritus in my office bears witness to a constant stream of friends, visitors, donors, colleagues, and students, as well as the many projects that emerged from those associations.

Above all, it has been the people that have made my days . . . and nights . . . at the Kelsey so remarkable. If it weren’t for Margaret, Elaine, and Sharon, I would never have found a niche at the Kelsey. I can’t thank them enough for their friendship, scholarly guidance, and their willingness, many eons ago, to take a risk on a newly minted, unemployed PhD in Aegean prehistory. Over time, they helped create a position for me as curator and associate director. The other denizens of the Kelsey have been equally extraordinary—field, Suzanne, Claudia, Janet, Terry, Alex, Sandra, Peg, Lorene, and Scott have offered friendship, humor, support, and a constant stream of creative exchanges, spicing my life with the MDR of Vita Min G (Minimum Daily Requirement of Vitamins G). Throughout those years, there have been a constant stream of creative exchanges, spicing my life with the MDR of Vita Min G (Minimum Daily Requirement of Vitamins G).

EXHIBITION TO EXPLORE RECONSTRUCTION OF PAST

The exhibition “Discovery! Excavating the Ancient World,” which will run from August 23 to November 10, 2013, explores all the different ways that Kelsey-affiliated scholars study, interpret, and reconstruct experience of the past, from work in museums and archives to visual interpretation to excavation to survey to the organization of our data. Showcasing the multidimensional work and methodologies of art historians, conservators, registrars, archaeologists, historians, bioarchaeologists, environmental specialists, and sound experts, the exhibition takes as a point of departure the questions we ask and the different ways in which we go about answering them.

At a teaser for the many discoveries awaiting exhibition visitors, we highlight here the work of exhibition contributors who explore plant and animal data from archaeological landscapes. The Kelsey is fortunate to be a center of bioarchaeological research in the Mediterranean region, sponsoring research from Egypt through Israel, ancient Greece, and Rome, which provides the raw data to answer many questions about ancient economies, social structure, and environmental change.

Student participation is a vital part of our exhibition and research agendas, and many thanks are due to IPCCA student Ivan Cangemi, who assisted with exhibition planning and design while holding a research assistantship at the Kelsey.

JANET RICHARDS, CURATOR

WOULDN’T it be nice to know how ancient cities were able to feed their growing population?

Two field projects sponsored by the Kelsey Museum offer a perfect opportunity to investigate patterns of production and redistribution of food during the emergence of urban centers in Central Italy: the excavation at the site of S. Onofrio—Rome floral harbor and a sacred area during the Iron Age and Archaic period—and the excavation of the nearby archaic Latin city of Galeria. Animal bones and plant remains are collected from each archaeological deposit during the excavation and then analyzed in order to understand their socioeconomic context.

My work has focused on the charred plant remains recovered through the flotation of archaeological deposits. The material provides a wealth of information to reconstruct ancient farming methods and storage systems. Different techniques can be applied to the samples to answer questions about labor organization, redistribution practices, and even sociopolitical structure. At a larger scale, sites can be compared within a region to better understand the economic systems.

Larisa Metta, Research Associate, Kelsey Museum and Department of Anthropology and Classical Studies

Humans have a major impact on the environment. They have caused global warming and the extinction of species. But less well understood and studied are some of the subtler effects humans can have on the environment. A mounting number of ecological, phylogeographic, and biogeographical studies suggest that vertebrate communities in the Mediterranean are shaped not only by prevailing environmental conditions and geologic history but also by human activities.

Beginning in prehistory human activities have resulted in extinctions and in important species introductions. Thus, patterns of species distribution in the region, as well as the concomitant shifts in natural habitats—in other words the whole biotic environment of the region—one need to be understood as the product of a dynamic interplay between nature and human agency.

The focus of our interdisciplinary collaboration between ecology and archeology is the distribution of Mediterranean reptiles, a group of widespread and ecologically important, yet largely overlooked, terrestrial vertebrates. We have combined information from the usually disparate fields of animal biology, archaeology, and archaeozoology to study three prominent reptile species that were introduced into distant regions through anthropogenic transportation. The reptiles are the African chameleons, the rough-tailed agama lizard, and the leopard snake. What were the historic processes that led to the introduction of these species to new areas?

Johannes Foufopoulos, Associate Professor, School of Natural Resources and Environment and Deirdre Margomenos, Lecturer in Modern Greek, Department of Classical Studies

MY WORK in Egypt has focused on the Old Kingdom economy and social structure. The questions I try to answer are related to how the Old Kingdom economy worked and what was the infrastructure that supported pyramid construction. One site I have been working at is the Workers’ Town, Giza, where the builders of the pyramid of Menkaure lived. My research at the Workers’ Town is focused on the diet of the residents, in particular their consumption of meat. My main data set is the broken animal bones we find in our excavations that are mostly the result of ancient meals. I have found a strong correlation between status and diet at Giza. One good example of this is from a small excavation of a feature we call the Pottery Mound. This excavation is located in an area of the site with very large houses that probably housed administrators. The Pottery Mound was a deposit that was filled with pottery, animal bone, and artifacts typical of scribes.

Among the animal bone fragments in the Pottery Mound, 85 percent are from young, less than one-year, cattle. I examined the proportion of boar to hind limbs in the sample of cattle bone fragments. I expected a ratio of hind to fore limb fragments of 1.5:1. The ratio I found was 1.6:1. Where were all the forelimb fragments? Does this tell us something about the social structure and economy of the Old Kingdom?

These are two of the many questions my research has addressed using the Workers’ Town and other Old Kingdom data sets.

Richard Redding, Associate Research Scientist, Kelsey Museum

Richard Redding identifying animal bone fragments in the laboratory at Giza, Egypt. The buses in the foreground are his modern, comparative collection (photo courtesy of Richard Redding).
EXCAVATING GABII: RESULTS OF THE 2012 SEASON AND PLANS FOR 2013

The fourth consecutive season of excavations at Gabii marked the beginning of a new three-year research cycle (2012-2014), funded by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 2012, more than twenty staff members and forty volunteers from across the country participated in the seven-week program (fig. 1), contributing to a very successful campaign. The undergraduate students enrolled in the Gabii Project field practicum, which was conducted in collaboration with the University of Verona, Italy, were also able to receive academic credit.

Research activities concentrated on two sectors (Area D and F) of the excavation site, which now encompasses a one-hectare area near the center of the ancient city. As part of the fieldwork, an extensive Ground-Penetrating Radar survey was also undertaken by partners of the University of Rome II. The overall results confirmed the exceptional state of preservation of Archeaic deposits at Gabii and presented various lines of evidence for civic architecture of the Republican period.

In Area D, which is located on the southeast corner of the dig, the excavations exposed other portions of an elite compound dating to the 7th and 6th centuries BC. The building is composed of two axial rooms surrounded by a precinct wall. The stratigraphy suggests that the room to the north was a late addition. In the Imperial period, the domestic structures in the neighboring city block were also abandoned, and the area was occupied by a small necropolis and a large quarry.

The strategy for the 2013 campaign (June 16-August 11) is to continue the sampling of the Archeaic levels in Area D, reaching the remains of hut features underlying the 7th and 6th centuries BC architecture (these remains have been identified in a section exposed by a modern drainage ditch that crosses the area). In Area F, the excavation will be expanded so as to define more precisely the limits and internal subdivisions of the mid-Republican building, elucidating its chronology and function.

To keep up with finds of the coming season, visit the Gabii Project’s website: http://sitebuilder.umich.edu/gabii/project.

NEW WORK AT KARANIS INVITES COMPARISONS

The University of Michigan completed excavations at the Graeco-Roman site of Karanis, Egypt, in 1931. This concluded more than ten years of work, initiated in 1924 by Francis W. Kelsey, U-M Professor of Latin. Of the more than 70,000 artifacts excavated, over 40,000 made their way to the Kelsey Museum. Besides the artifacts, the Kelsey archives hold many documents, photographs, maps, drawings, and other materials from the excavation. The Michigan excavation was designed as a salvage project, to rescue the site as much as possible from the obsidianus (fertilizer diggers). The excavations focused on the central area of the site, leaving much more to be discovered. Yet once Michigan left in 1935, the site lay dormant for many years.

From October through December 2012, I had the pleasure of joining the Fayum Project at Karanis. The team is headed by UCLA professor and project codirector Willeke Wendrich, who has been excavating at Karanis since 2005. I was the site’s registrar, the person charged with documenting and cataloging all the finds from the field. My primary role for the season was to catalogue the collections, enter data into the database, and pack the collections at the end of the season. This afforded me the chance to see every artifact excavated in 2012. My familiarity with the Kelsey Karanis collections allowed me to compare the finds from the 1920s with those from the 2000s. I was struck by how similar yet different the UCLA finds were from Michigan’s. The kind of materials were familiar. There were pottery, faience, baskets, coins, bone dice, glass, textiles, seeds, metals, and animal remains (bone). These are consistent with what Kelsey’s crew found. But Michigan had found more complete vessels, both pottery and glass, as well as larger fragments of textiles and papyrus.

Regardless of size, the UCLA finds were impressive and telling. They include a faience lion bowl, a faience lion figurine, the head of a duck made of bronze, used perhaps as an inlay. Several whole baskets, and even a large rope net, were found. Two sandals were excavated in the dumps. One made of plant fibers, the other from leather. Three papyrus fragments, and two ostraka (inscribed pithossherds) were discovered, one with clear and very neat handwriting. A vathe of whole vessels was left in an oven.

The visit to Karanis gave me the opportunity to see how much the site has changed in less than a hundred years. U-M photographer George Swain photographed the site, its buildings, the finds, and the workers for the Michigan excavation. These images comprise a large section of the Kelsey photographic archives. I tried to recreate some of Swain’s images in order to document the changes. New buildings are being erected. The site is expected to be digitized (fig. 2). Wall were discovered, either from deterioration or from burial in the sand. Photographs taken in 2012 will be catalogued into the archives.

The site of Karanis still has much to offer to students and scholars. The UCLA team will continue to excavate there. Though the purpose of the current expedition (research) differs from the earlier Michigan mission (salvage), the data, when combined, will begin to reveal new insights, questions, and avenues for research. The potential to have both projects speak to each other is a dream we will work to accomplish. In the future, we may be able to search for finds, maps, even GIS files that bridges the eighty years between excavations.

Sebastián Encina

Opposite page: Fig. 1. The Gabii Project 2012 team during one of the weekly trench reviews.

Fig. A. Andrea Bruck (IPCAA) excavates an infant burial found in Area D.

Fig. 2. Students expose the ashlar terracing wall of the mid-Republican complex.
The Kelsey Museum Associates sponsor the Museum’s outreach and development activities and provide program support. The public is encouraged to join the Associates and participate in Museum activities. For more information, see 744.924.952.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS
Kelsey Contemporaries: Kayla Romberger and Alisha Wessler
Closes June 16

Red Rock & Rust Belt: A Tale of Two Cities
Guest curator: Susan Webb
June 30–July 21
Opening: Sunday, June 30, 2–4 pm

Discovery: Excavating the Ancient World
August 23–November 10
Opening: Friday, September 20, 6–8 pm
Associates preview: September 20, 5:30 pm

DROP-IN TOURS
Sundays, 2–3 pm
June 2 and 16
July 7 and 21
August 4 and 18

DROP-IN TOURS
Sundays, 2–3 pm
June 2 and 16
July 7 and 21
August 4 and 18

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☐ $250 Sponsor
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☐ $500 Patron
☐ $50 Dual/Family
☐ $1000 Benefactor
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☐ $__________ Other

If no fund is selected, your gift will be used where it is needed most.

OR

Monthly Gift:
Charged the 10th of each month

☐ $__________

STEP TWO:
CHOOSE YOUR AREA TO SUPPORT

$__________ Kelsey Museum of Archaeology Gifts (303888)

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