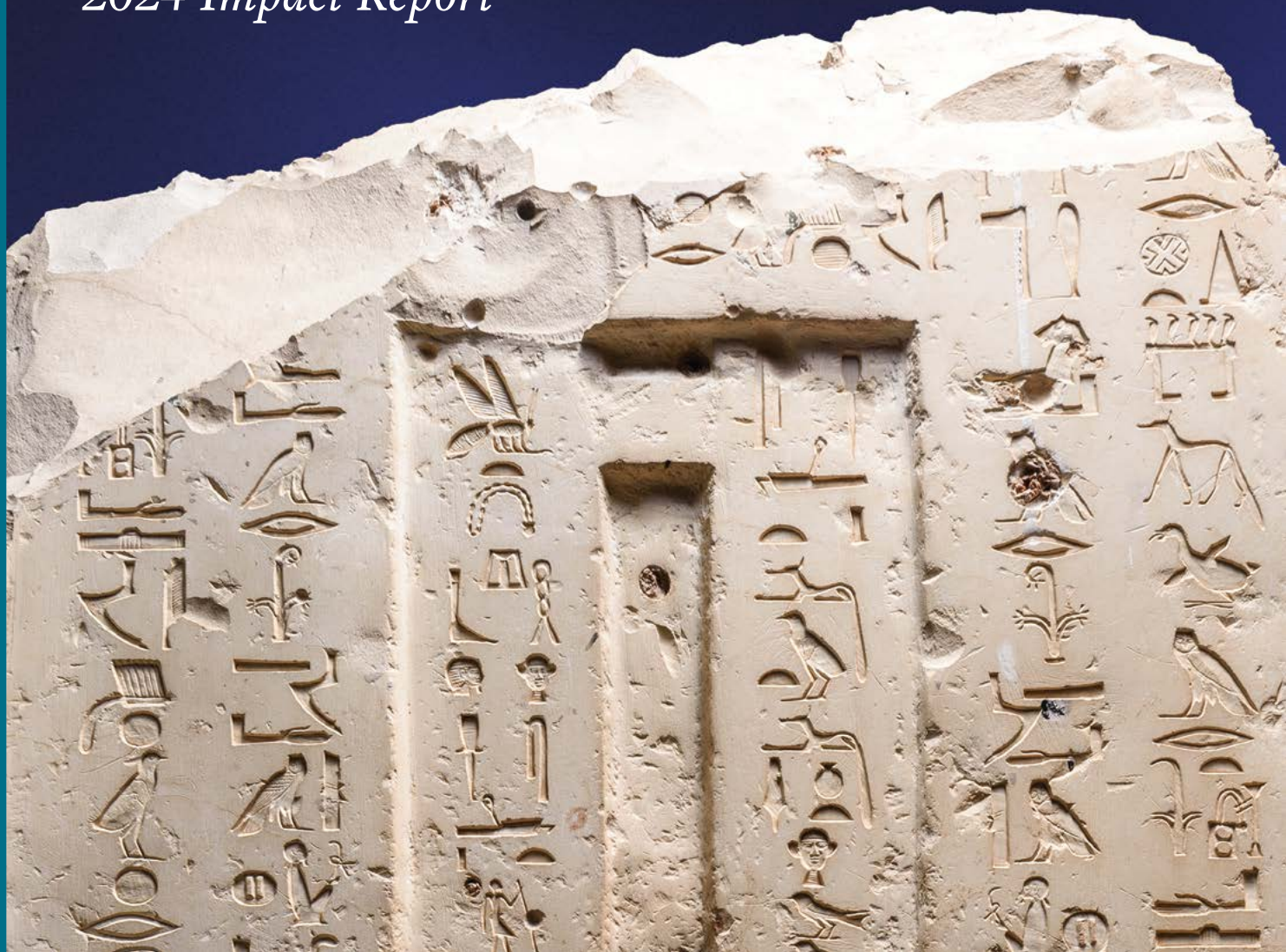


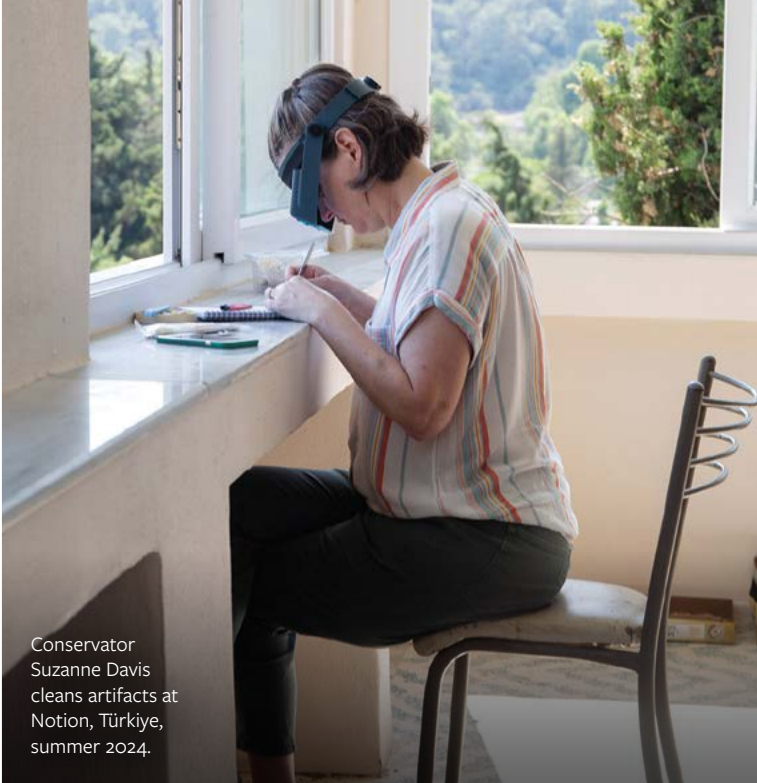
KELSEY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

2024 Impact Report





Collections Manager Michelle Fontenot shows middle school students a mummified hawk during the inaugural Camp Kelsey, June 2024.



Conservator Suzanne Davis cleans artifacts at Notion, Türkiye, summer 2024.



A young visitor uses boxes to construct the walls of the Colosseum at Family Day, October 2024.

STAFF

Emily Allison-Siep, *Communications Editor*
Nicola Barham, *Assistant Curator of Ancient Art*
Dominique Brown, *Custodian*
Katherine Burge, *Visiting Curator*
Caroline Callander, *Security Officer*
Eric Campbell, *Museum Graphic Designer*
Jolene Collins, *Security Sergeant*
Suzanne Davis, *Associate Curator and Head of Conservation*
Geoff Emberling, *Research Scientist*
Michelle Fontenot, *Collections Manager*
Elaine Gazda, *Curator Emerita*
Sharon Herbert, *Curator Emerita*
Christina Johnson, *Executive Secretary*
Jennifer Kirker, *Associate Director*
Scott Meier, *Museum Exhibition Coordinator*
Tamika Mohr, *Chief Administrator*
Laura Motta, *Assistant Curator for Archaeobiological Collections*
Chris Motz, *Manager of Digital Assets*
Shannon Ness, *University Programs Coordinator*
Kathryn Peneyra, *Graduate Fellow in Conservation*
Will Pestle, *Director of Education*
Janet Richards, *Curator for Dynastic Egypt*
Caroline Roberts, *Conservator*
Margaret Cool Root, *Curator Emerita*
Nicholas Roush, *Security Officer*
Matthew Spunar, *Security Officer*
Lauren Talalay, *Curator Emerita*
Nicola Terrenato, *Director and Curator for the Archaeology of the Italian Peninsula*
T. G. Wilfong, *Curator of Graeco-Roman Egyptian Collections*
John Williams, *Security Supervisor*
Jordan Wold, *Security Officer*
Bruce Worden, *Scientific Illustrator/Artist*
Stephanie Wottreng Haley, *Community and Youth Educator*
Alexander Zwinak, *Graduate Program Coordinator*

CONTENTS

From the Director..... 2

Our Impact..... 4

Research & Reparative Collaboration..... 5

University & Community Engagement..... 16

Capacity & Operations..... 24

Financial Foundation 27

LSA.UMICH.EDU/KELSEY

434 S. State Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(734) 764-9304
kelseymuse@umich.edu

CONNECT WITH US!



@kelseymuseum



@kelseymuseumof
archaeology609

ON THE COVER

Sister exhibitions in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Sohag, Egypt, bridge miles and millennia. Designed, conserved, and curated by Abydos Middle Cemetery (AMC) Project team members and Kelsey Museum staff—collaborating closely with Egypt’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the staff of the Sohag National Museum—these exhibitions represent the culmination of the hard work of an extensive multinational and multidisciplinary team. The image pictured on the cover of this report shows one of the false doors from Weni the Elder’s mastaba tomb. This limestone slab was excavated by the AMC Project team in 1999 and is currently on display at the Sohag National Museum. Read more about this collaboration on p. 5.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



DEAR FRIENDS,

On the final day of the Kelsey Museum’s strategic planning retreat in February 2025, our wonderful facilitator, Gail Anderson, told us to break into small groups. She asked us to think about who our audience is, the places the museum engages with, and our aspirations for each of these categories.

As the designated scribe at the table, I jotted down “everybody” before she even finished her question. It was perhaps a glib answer for a big question (admittedly, we were all quite tired after days of meetings, planning, discussing, and visioning). But as I look back on the activities that Kelsey staff, faculty, students, and researchers engaged in over the last year, it becomes apparent that, although “everybody” might be an exaggeration, our geographical reach is indeed wide, with an audience to match—extending all over the globe through our research, fieldwork, publications, presentations, and exhibitions.

Our goal over the next ten years involves expanding access to the ancient world even more. As we put the finishing touches on our new strategic plan, I’m pleased to report that some of this work has already started. In the Education Department, for example, we are making a concerted effort to figure out who our visitors are by implementing far more granular data-collection mechanisms. We want to know who is coming through our doors, but perhaps more importantly, we want to know who isn’t showing up—information that will allow us to rethink our outreach and reposition ourselves culturally within the broader community of Southeast Michigan.

Another pillar for our vision of the future is the concept of reparative collaboration, which centers on activities that seek to address and correct the exploitation of the colonial era. This includes advancing partnerships with diasporic

and descendant communities in which fieldwork and research currently occur, as well as within the museum itself. Kelsey staff and faculty have already laid a great foundation for this type of work. Janet Richards, Suzanne Davis, and their team are basking in the glow of a successful exhibition opening that has had a transformative effect on the local community in Sohag, Egypt. Meanwhile, Geoff Emberling is working closely with colleagues in Jebel Barkal and El-Kurru, Sudan, to ensure the protection of cultural heritage in remarkably difficult and rapidly changing circumstances.

Our work is especially invigorated by a generous gift from businessman and U-M alum Steve Klinsky in late 2024. Given to the Kelsey Museum and Museum of Anthropological Archaeology to support a series of “Klinsky Expeditions” across the globe, this donation provides much-needed funds at a challenging time for fieldwork abroad. It also marks a significant cross-unit collaboration, as anthropological archaeologists and Kelsey archaeologists work side by side within the same framework.

As you flip through these pages, other elements of our new strategic plan are threaded throughout. For instance, the organizing principle for this Impact Report aligns with the four overarching goals of the plan: to leverage research and reparative collaboration, to expand university and community engagement, to optimize our capacity and operations, and to broaden our financial foundation. You’ll also notice our brand-new mission, values, and vision to the right. Together, these items serve as a compass and encapsulate how the Kelsey Museum intends to make a difference as we look to the years ahead. ■

—Nic Terrenato, Director

MISSION

Excavating the past, building community today.

VALUES

The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology upholds these values:

- Collaboration and engagement
- Research and learning
- Creativity and innovation
- Inclusion and representation
- Respect and empathy
- Ethics and equity
- Reflection and dialogue
- Communication and access
- Preservation and sustainability

VISION 2034

Inspiring greater empathy and connection in the world through leadership in archaeology and community engagement.

OUR IMPACT

research & reparative collaboration

By fostering collaborative, reparative partnerships, providing research opportunities for students, and striving for excellence in conservation, fieldwork, and academic endeavors, we broaden the understanding and appreciation of ancient cultures for global audiences.

From public events and exhibitions to object handling and field trips, the Kelsey Museum provides opportunities for hands-on interaction, inspires lifelong learning, and creates pathways that enrich the educational experience for students of all ages.

university & community engagement

financial foundation

To expand impact, minimize risk, and align with its strategic priorities, the Kelsey seeks to widen and diversify its financial base through donations, grants, and membership—ensuring a stable foundation for innovative research, exhibits, and educational initiatives.

Through the optimization of our physical space and staffing, we can enhance workplace culture, ensure effective systems are in place, and improve personnel practices and facility management, laying a solid base for impactful museum experiences for all.

capacity & operations

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS, LOCAL IMPACT: THE WENI EXHIBITION IN SOHAG

It takes a village to bring any museum exhibition to life. In the case of *The Governor of Upper Egypt Weni the Elder and the Origins of the Osiris Festival*, that village spanned four continents, involved three museums, and consisted of dozens of individuals working tirelessly to reconstruct a 6th-dynasty tomb chapel for modern audiences.

Opened in October 2024 by Dr. Mohamed Ismail Khaled, secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, this exhibition at Egypt's Sohag National Museum reunites objects from the Abydos Middle Cemetery (AMC), both those found by French Egyptologist Auguste Mariette in the mid-19th century and those excavated by the University of Michigan-based AMC Project since 1999. Kelsey Museum staff worked closely with the AMC Project team and with colleagues at the Sohag museum to design, conserve, and curate the exhibition—along with its sister photo show at the Kelsey—over the course of two-and-a-half years. This ambitious project was funded by a generous grant awarded to project directors Janet Richards and Suzanne Davis from the American Research Center in Egypt's Antiquities Endowment Fund, with substantial support from U-M's College of Literature Science and the Arts, the Kelsey Museum, the Department of Middle East Studies, and Marjorie M. Fisher.

While the official unveiling received media attention on Egypt's national news channel, the Sohag exhibition's impact has extended far beyond any one-day celebration. Visitorship to the Sohag National Museum has more than doubled since the exhibition opened, reflecting the power of archaeology to spark excitement about the ancient world. According to AMC Project team members who live in Sohag, the exhibition has had another surprising consequence: community members have adopted Weni as one of their ancestors. As families walk among the 4,000-year-old objects bearing images of Weni the Elder, they look for his distinctive features among their elders and in their children. ■

To see photos from the exhibition's opening in October 2024, visit the Kelsey's website at myumi.ch/Rm42G.



The exhibition's publicity image of two joined blocks depicting Weni the Elder exemplifies the team's goal: to reunite the material results of Mariette's 1860 work (here, Weni's head and upper torso) with that of the Michigan project (here, Weni's lower torso and legs, found by the AMC Project team in situ in 1999).




ABSTRACT CHRONOLOGIES: UNRAVELING THE ORIGINS OF KELSEY MUSEUM TEXTILES

The Kelsey houses more than 5,000 fragments of ancient Egyptian textiles from clothing and furnishings, a globally significant collection that rivals those of major museums like the Metropolitan and British Museums in size. These textiles were historically labeled as “Coptic” and thought to be produced in Egypt during the Christian period because of a bias that said that their abstract iconography was unlikely to be earlier and Roman in date. Similarly, 20th-century scholars anticipated that all media would shift following this period to aniconic patterning.

Nicola Barham, assistant curator of ancient art at the Kelsey Museum, is suspicious of these assumptions. Some motifs, like the one on the textile here, can be shown to persist across regions and from the 3rd to the 7th centuries, despite widespread cultural change over this period. Meanwhile, her research on other media has highlighted how the ancient Roman world often departs from the strict interest in naturalism with which it is most commonly associated.

In 2023–2024, Nicola won a \$25,000 History of Art Faculty Grant to definitively date samples from the Kelsey Museum’s collection of ancient textiles. Supported by conservator Suzanne Davis—and working in collaboration with a carbon-dating laboratory in Europe—the project is now underway. Initial results already show that certain Kelsey textiles date to the late Roman period or shortly thereafter rather than the later date traditionally ascribed to them. “This is exciting because so very few textiles of this kind have been carbon dated internationally, particularly to current standards,” Nicola said. “The potential for establishing a scientifically based chronology for this class of artifacts in the coming years is very promising.” ■



KM 91024 (pictured) was one of five textile fragments sent out for initial testing.

30
events supported
by the Ambassadors
Fund for Cultural
Preservation grant

1,100
people reached by
community programs

Attendees at a heritage event in
El-Zuma village. Photo: Sami Elamin.



PRESERVING THE PAST, SECURING THE FUTURE: CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN SUDAN

As the war in Sudan entered its second full year, a grant from the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) of the US Department of State provided vital support for community-engaged conservation at Jebel Barkal. Our archaeological colleagues in Sudan worked to protect the site and its monuments, all while continuing their program of outreach to schoolchildren and displaced people (see image below).

In addition to the inherent difficulties of doing this type of work during an active conflict, the year 2024 brought unexpected challenges that our colleagues responded to with quick thinking and rapid action. In August, for example, exceptionally heavy rains swept through the area around Jebel Barkal, collapsing houses and killing more than 100 people in nearby towns. As the rainfall threatened conservation at the site, the team at Jebel Barkal repaired drainage channels to divert water away from the ancient temples. They also removed a remarkable growth of new bushes that began after the rains—preventing the fast-growing roots from destroying the ancient structures.

At the same time, the rainfall exposed two areas of the ancient site that had previously been unknown. To the south of the Jebel, a series of grave shafts appeared when the overlying sand was washed away, while to the north, the remains of several stone-built structures appeared. In response to these unforeseen circumstances, a portion of the AFCP grant was repurposed, allowing the team in Sudan to conduct a rescue excavation of the exposed burials. ■

A little ways south of Jebel Barkal, the archaeological site at El-Kurru, Sudan, likewise experienced conservation challenges. With so many displaced people living in and around El-Kurru, the internet and mobile phone networks have been overloaded, with the best reception found at the top of the site’s largest pyramid. But people climbing the structure displaced rocks, which tumbled down and damaged the existing facing of the pyramid.

A small grant from the US Committee of the Blue Shield—is intended to change this by setting up an internet café in the village, far from the pyramid, using a Starlink satellite modem. Although we are still waiting for permission to proceed due to security concerns, the hope is that this creative solution will provide a useful community space while ensuring the safety of El-Kurru’s archaeological heritage.



Kathryn Peneyra, shown here treating a mosaic fragment, has pursued a variety of projects at the Kelsey Museum, but the most impactful may be her work with stamped Roman bricks. Purchased by Francis Kelsey in the 1920s, this collection of more than 200 bricks is suffering from dramatic salt efflorescence that often completely obscures the stamped surface. Kathryn's research has revealed that these are “museum” salts; they were formed from the bricks' exposure to organic acids outgassed by the wood cabinets where the bricks were stored from the 1920s until the 1990s. Her research on how to conserve the bricks continues, but the solutions Kathryn develops will benefit not only the bricks at the Kelsey but also the many similar objects suffering the same fate in museums around the world.

BRIDGING GENERATIONS: TRAINING AND RESEARCH IN THE CONSERVATION LAB

Beginning in the fall of 2024, the Kelsey's Conservation Department has had the pleasure of hosting graduate student Kathryn Peneyra for a fellowship in archaeological conservation. Kathryn—who is completing the final year of her graduate degree in the conservation of cultural heritage at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)—is the most recent member of a large and ever-growing group of people who have studied conservation at the Kelsey Museum.

For more than 50 years, the Conservation Department has helped undergraduate students gain their first exposure to conservation, taught essential preservation skills to archaeology graduate students, and assisted senior conservation students like Kathryn in pursuing research and

polishing their skills. Over the decades, 100-plus Kelsey-trained conservators have gone on to work in settings as diverse as the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. It turns out that early career study of archaeological conservation prepares people well for jobs in a wide range of settings!

But the benefits that come from working with students flow in both directions. Undergraduate students bring enthusiasm and new ideas, while graduate students are trained in—and willing to share—the most up-to-date technical methods and scholarly approaches. All the while, these students pursue research that advances the long-term preservation of archaeological materials. ■



conservation BY THE NUMBERS: 2024

424

objects assessed for
use in teaching

87

objects conserved
for exhibitions

4

new publications by
Kelsey conservators

3

excavation projects
supported

NOTION, TÜRKIYE

Dig Director: Christopher Ratté

Archaeological research at Notion in 2024 continued to contribute vivid and valuable new evidence for the turbulent history of Ionia during Hellenistic times and for the different ways in which local communities responded to Roman rule. In addition to excavating public and residential spaces, the team began documenting cemeteries outside the city that have never before been systematically examined. Work also began on the construction of a facility for the secure storage of movable artifacts found in the excavations. This new space—consisting of a permanent depot, a conservation lab and photo studio, and an area for washing, sorting, and studying artifacts—will serve as the excavation’s headquarters in 2025 and beyond. ■



IPAMAA student Caroline Everts (left) and Boston University professor and IPAMAA graduate Andrea Berlin (right) sorting pottery from West Ridge House.

PELLA, GREECE

Dig Directors: Lisa Nevett and David Stone

The Pella Urban Dynamics Project seeks to build a comprehensive picture of the ancient settlement of Pella and the lives of its inhabitants through field survey, geophysical survey, and excavation. In 2024, the team continued excavating a substantial courtyard house to understand how its residents created their identities through domestic organization and consumption practices. Team members also surveyed the Roman colony of Pella; their findings suggested that this site covered approximately 24 hectares. Along with continuing to investigate the house, the team plans to explore the density of occupation in the colony and define its chronology more closely during the next field season. ■

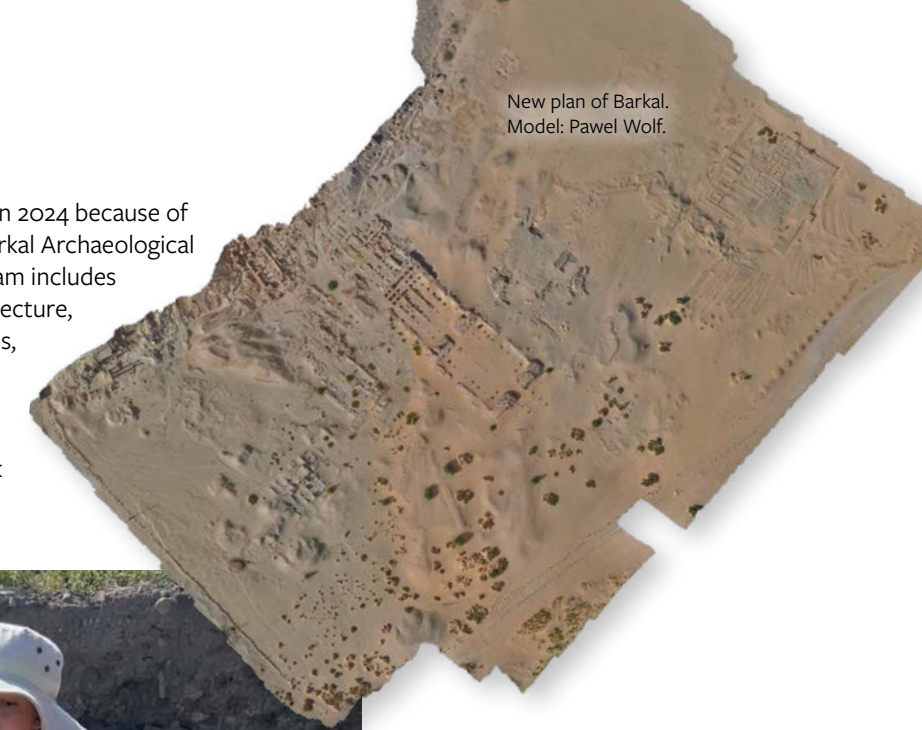
U-M undergraduate Meghan Dwan and Aristotle University student Ireni Kriki surveying at Pella.



JEBEL BARKAL, SUDAN

Dig Director: Geoff Emberling

Even though there was not an excavation season in 2024 because of the war in Sudan, work continued on the Jebel Barkal Archaeological Project through analysis and presentation. The team includes 16 scholars in 8 countries who are analyzing architecture, ceramics, and faunal and archaeobotanical remains, as well as the excavation records themselves. Team members also began work on a new highly detailed, accurate photo model of the site (see right) and presented various aspects of their work for scholarly and general audiences. ■



New plan of Barkal.
Model: Pawel Wolf.



Shovel tossing in Area J-North at Gabii.

GABII, ITALY

Dig Director: Nic Terrenato

The summer of 2024 was the first season that Gabii, along with nearby Praeneste, was designated as part of a new archaeological park. With this arrangement, there is now a park director and staff entirely dedicated to supporting these two sites. During the season, the Gabii Project team began excavating a new city block containing a monumental entrance to a buried building. Part of its imposing facade included a four-meter-deep pool or fountain carved into the bedrock. Although team members haven’t finished excavating it—2025 will tell them more—they are intrigued to learn about its function and what may be lying at the bottom. ■

BONE BY BONE: INSIGHTS FROM TEL ANAFA'S FAUNAL REMAINS

Located in modern Israel, the site of Tel Anafa is unique in the area as a Hellenistic-Roman settlement. It was a residential estate during the Hellenistic period, perhaps for merchants from Tyre, before being occupied by several small Roman houses.

Tel Anafa was excavated in the 1960s–1980s under the direction of Saul S. Weinberg (University of Missouri) and Sharon C. Herbert (University of Michigan). The Kelsey Museum and the *Journal of Roman Archaeology* have published most of the material from the site, including about 15 percent of the faunal remains. Studied by the late Richard Redding, these remains allowed him to draw conclusions about the changing agriculture at Tel Anafa over time as it shifted from intensive farming to cattle herding. Between 1988 and 2024, however, the rest of the faunal material remained unwashed and unstudied.

Now, Laura Motta (director of the Kelsey's Archaeobiology Lab), Bailey Franzoi (IPAMAA), and a team of undergraduate research assistants, including three students in the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP), are working to address this gap. They are looking at the other 85 percent, doing the important work of identifying and quantifying faunal remains, as well as applying modern techniques like isotope analysis. Their project paints a picture of how the inhabitants of Tel Anafa interacted with their environment over time and across political regimes.

"I'm really happy to see this project through from the very beginning stages—cleaning material essentially fresh off excavation—all the way through to analysis and interpretation," said Bailey, whose dissertation focuses on the Tel Anafa faunal remains. "Having an assemblage this large and well-preserved and in the United States is really rare nowadays, and it's a great opportunity. It is also personally very meaningful to be working on one of Richard's previous projects and see his work brought to completion." ■



Undergrads Janet Larios (UROP) and Hannah Magnus clean bones from Tel Anafa.

“Working on the Tel Anafa project has founded a new interest in bioarcheology within me....Not only do I really enjoy bone identification and observing tooth-wear patterns, but I also now have a better understanding of the expectations of researchers and goals of a lab.”

—Alyssa Wakefield, undergraduate research assistant, UROP

ENHANCING DIGITAL ACCESS

Chris Motz joined the Kelsey Museum as manager of digital assets in the summer of 2024. Since then, he has collaborated with the U-M Library's digital collections team to improve the usability of the museum's public-facing database (quod.lib.umich.edu/k/kelsey)—reorganizing and renaming fields, transforming data into legible formats, and refining the options for searching and filtering. We are also

excited to now offer this same data in downloadable CSV and XML formats, which will allow scholars and members of the public to analyze our collection and explore it in new ways. In addition, we have been cleaning up data and streamlining the interface of the museum's internal database, improving operations and facilitating access to detailed artifact information by staff, curators, and students. ■

ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN 2024

The Kelsey Museum sustained its scholarly momentum with an impressive array of publications and presentations by staff, curators, dig directors, and IPAMAA students—highlighting our impact on global archaeological discourse. Written topics spanned from specialized fields such as conservation and bioarchaeology to community heritage approaches to close studies of Kelsey objects, which appeared in leading journals, book series, and edited volumes.

The Kelsey community also engaged with audiences of professional peers and the general public through diverse formats, including workshops, round tables, virtual webinars, and in-person lectures. Presented both individually and collaboratively, this vast array of presentations allowed us to extend our reach further, drawing local and international audiences eager to explore new archaeological and research insights. Explore the full list of contributions at myumi.ch/4mjxp. ■



At the turn of the 20th century, Francis W. Kelsey amassed a collection of 700 colorful stones dating to the Roman period—one of the largest and most varied such collections outside Europe. Coauthored by Professor Emeritus J. Clayton Fant (University of Akron) and former IPAMAA students Leah E. Long (Mercersburg Academy) and Lynley J. McAlpine (San Antonio Museum), *Roman Decorative Stone Collections in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology* traces each object's journey from antiquity to its current home in the Kelsey Museum. This richly illustrated volume represents a fruitful, multiyear collaboration between the authors, Curator Emerita Elaine Gazda, and Kelsey staff.

19

**cities in which
presentations
were given**

25

**articles, chapters,
and books published
in 2024**

60

**approximate number
of talks led by staff,
faculty, and students**

UNLOCKING THE PAST: COLLECTIONS USE AND ACCESS AT THE KELSEY

Housing more than 100,000 objects, the Kelsey Museum has a rich collection documenting the history of the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East, as well as the U-M archaeological research conducted there a century ago. With many objects now held in the Kelsey's collections storage, there are ample opportunities for the re-excitation of these materials by way of artifact and archival research.

Over the last year, the Kelsey hosted students, professors, and museum professionals from various nations—France, Canada, Germany, Egypt, and more—as well as the United States. Their research centered on excavations at Karanis, Egypt; Seleucia, Iraq; and Carthage and Leptiminus, Tunisia. These expansive projects are evidence of the continued significance of the Kelsey's collection in international archaeological conversations. ■

“Although my focus is on papyri—and literary papyri, in particular—[my] project has evolved to become deeply archaeological, and the access to archival material granted by the Kelsey Museum has been essential to our work's progress.”

—C. Mike Sampson,
University of Manitoba

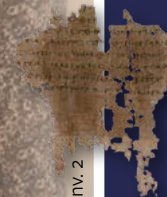
Left to right: Sally Bjork (Visual Resources Center), Scott Meier (exhibitions coordinator), and Eric Campbell (graphic designer) prepare textiles for photography in the registry.



KM 1987.1.4

In 2024, Noah Kaye, a history professor at Michigan State University, launched a research project focusing on the approximately 200 coins excavated by U-M at the site of Sepphoris, Palestine, in 1931. He is developing a new database to cross-reference these coins with both traditional and digital numismatic resources, utilizing a new reference to update their prior identifications. This project also provides opportunities to connect the Sepphoris coins to online databases, such as Oxford's *Roman Provincial Coinage* project.

Dr. Kaye views this work as foundational for teaching archaeology and regional history, highlighting Sepphoris's importance in Roman Palestine's urban and religious history.



P.Mich.inv. 2

For the past several years, the Collections Department has collaborated extensively with classics professor C. Mike Sampson (University of Manitoba) on his “Books of Karanis” project. Launched in 2021, this project investigates Greek literary culture in Karanis, Egypt, utilizing papyri and the rich excavation data from the University of Michigan's historical digs. Dr. Sampson, alongside archaeologists Drew Wilburn, Tom Landvatter, and Nick Hudson, hope to assemble “a wide-ranging reconsideration of Karanis' archaeology, synthesizing the excavation data along with analyses of the papyri, ceramics, and numismatic evidence.”

A NEW DIMENSION: THE DISKO PROJECT

In August 2024, the Kelsey Museum made its official foray into the world of 3-D modeling with the launch of its DiSKO website (diskoproject.kelsey.lsa.umich.edu). A project five years in the making, this website allows students, researchers, and the public to gain up-close looks at select artifacts in our collection—including objects not on display—through 3-D models.

The site has grown from 30 objects at launch to over 50 artifacts today, all of which can be viewed online or downloaded for 3-D printing. Now that the long-awaited website is live, team members are expanding and refining the project by continuing to scan objects. They are also integrating new technology and methods to better capture challenging artifacts—shiny marble statues, tiny amulets, and even glass—as well as training students in these techniques. We have also begun uploading models to Sketchfab (sketchfab.com/kelseymuseum), taking advantage of the platform's realistic lighting and adding our voice to the site's robust cultural heritage community. ■

3-D model of
a Bes figurine
(KM 1971.2.208).





330+

artifacts used for
object handling

12

departments that
participated in object
handling

1,474

students who handled
ancient artifacts

THE POWER OF OBJECT HANDLING

In 2024, nearly 1,500 students participated in object handling at the Kelsey Museum. Object handling is a highlight of our university programming, a gem of the Education Department, and a point of pride for the entire Kelsey. While seeing objects behind glass in an exhibition case is, by itself, an enriching activity, the opportunity to hold real history in one's hands is a transformative experience for students from a wide variety of disciplines. No other museum on campus—or even in the region—offers the sort of hands-on experience this program provides for students to view objects up close and personally and to learn surrounded by ancient material. ■

“Students from this course sometimes contact me years afterward and say that the Kelsey artifact-handling sessions were among the best things they did at U-M.”

—Anonymous instructor,
Department of
Middle East Studies



We now have integrated analytics and other tools that allow us to summarize and visualize information about our collection. Through this process, we can pinpoint which objects have been used the most in classes—allowing us to identify trends in our education efforts and determine if objects need to be rotated out for conservation. Over the last five years, the most-used artifact has been a miniature Egyptian cippus of Horus (KM 3242b), which has appeared in 26 different classes! Dating to the Ptolemaic period (305–30 BCE), this magical amulet features the god Horus as a child, who confronted many challenges while growing up and trying to reclaim his father's throne. The object is very worn, suggesting its users may have used it as a worry stone when facing their own injuries and obstacles.

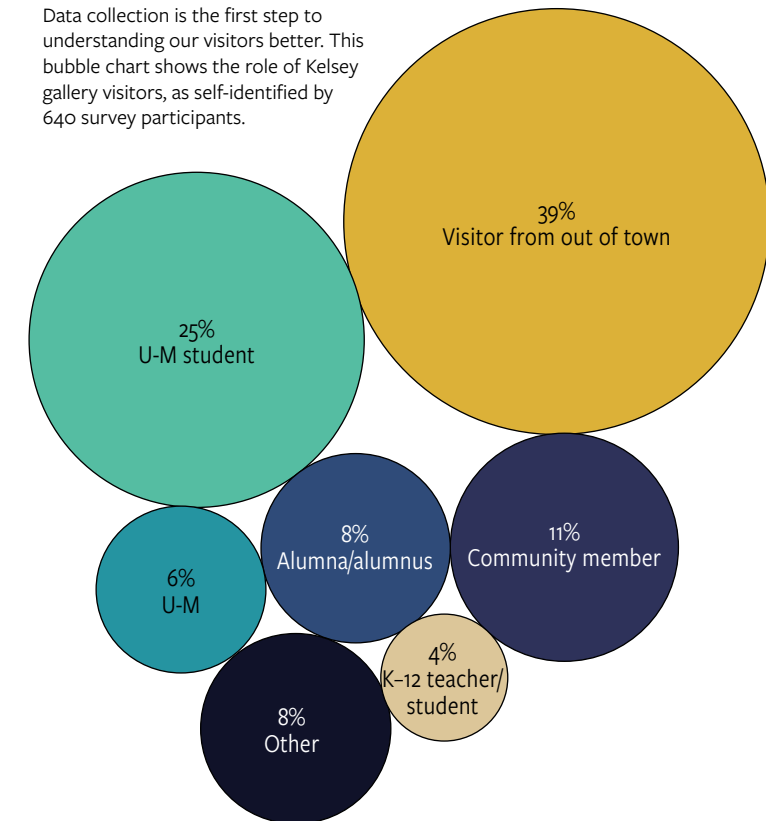
STUDENTS @ WORK

When the stress of exams gets to be too much, students can now turn to the Kelsey Museum as an alternative study space. In December 2024, students looking for a quiet place to work claimed one of a dozen large bean bag chairs placed throughout the Kelsey's galleries and spread out in one of our classrooms. Across the hall, we provided snacks and crafts for those seeking a break from their test anxieties. This Study Day marked the beginning of a tradition we intend to host every semester. We look forward to opening our doors again—for solace, stress-relief, or study—when the next exam period rolls around! ■



WHO IS VISITING THE KELSEY MUSEUM?

Data collection is the first step to understanding our visitors better. This bubble chart shows the role of Kelsey gallery visitors, as self-identified by 640 survey participants.





Reenactor Joseph Biggie with replica objects (below). Grad students Erica Venturo (right) and Madeleine Harris (below right) make crafts with visitors at Family Day, October 6, 2024.



HISTORY COMES ALIVE: ENGAGING YOUNG MINDS

Twice a year, the Kelsey celebrates its youngest visitors. Full of kid-friendly activities, our Family Days are our largest public programs of the year, often drawing in first-time visitors from the Ann Arbor community. These events make history engaging and accessible to children, aiming to spark within them an appreciation of museums and the ancient world.

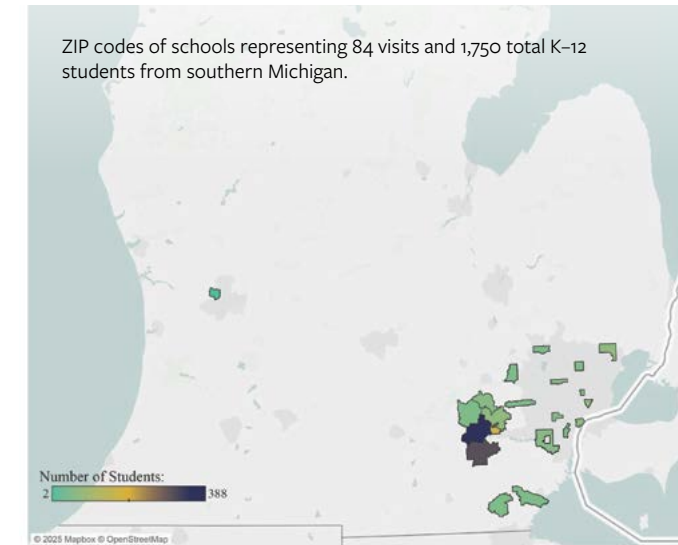
Our Fall 2024 Family Day encouraged children to discover the famed athletes of ancient Rome: gladiators! Along with in-gallery activities including scavenger hunts and storytelling, visitors crafted their own ancient toys and gladiator kits, and a balloon artist armed them with swords. Meanwhile, a Roman reenactor—dressed in soldier regalia and wielding replica objects—made history seeable and touchable to hundreds of history enthusiasts. ■

373

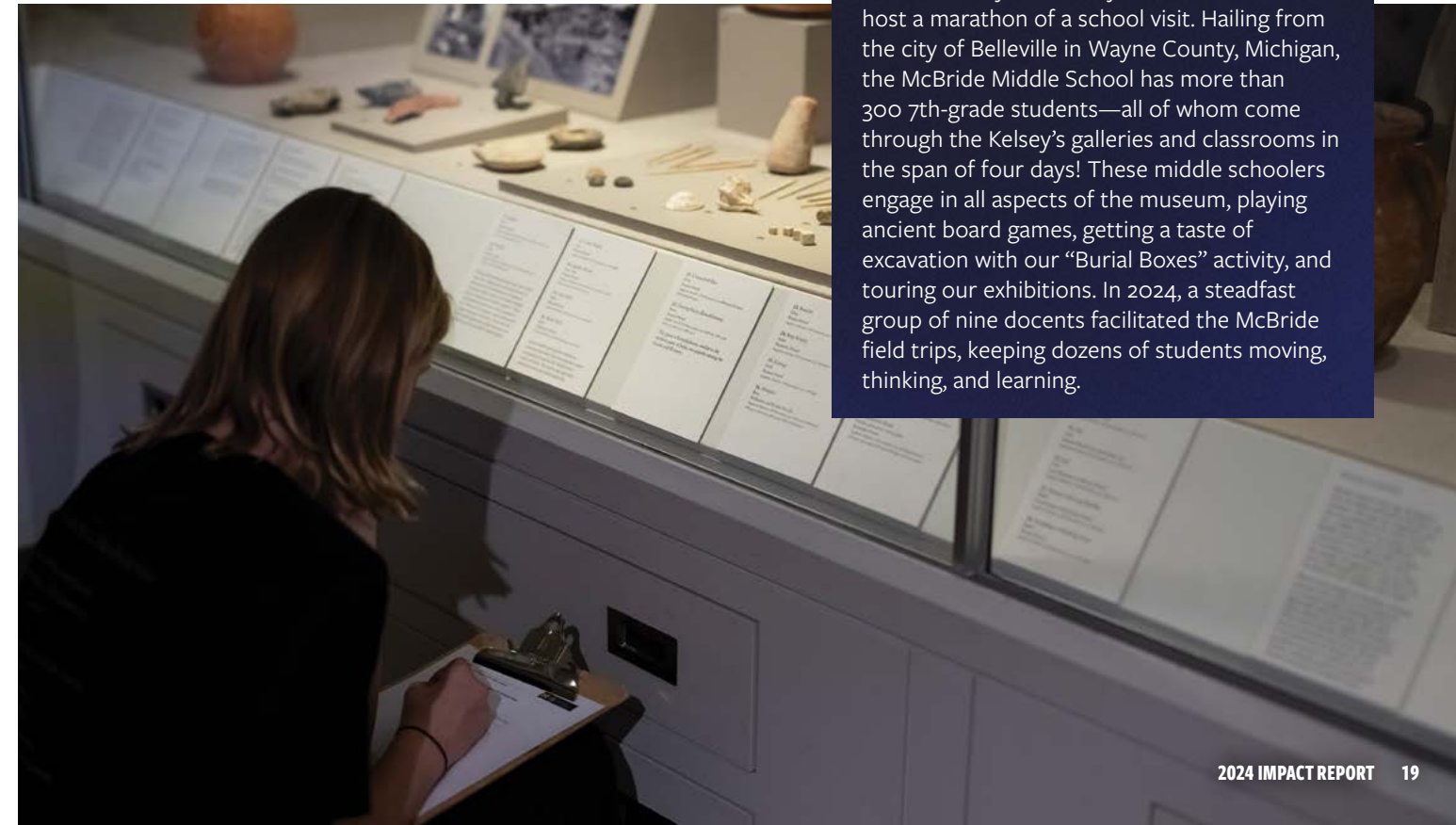
people attended Family Day in the fall of 2024

EXPANDING K-12 ACCESS AT THE KELSEY

While K-12 visits and programming have long been mainstays of our educational efforts, with some 1,750 students visiting in 2024 alone, these efforts have largely relied on schools finding us, rather than the Kelsey initiating intentional partnerships with local schools. As a result, the profiles of the schools and students who most often visit the Kelsey don't reflect the diversity of the communities of Southeast Michigan. In line with the museum's new strategic plan, the Education Department has initiated intentional efforts to partner with schools and communities that mirror the entirety of the region—from urban to rural, from public to private to homeschool, and from repeat visitors to schools and students who have never set foot in the Kelsey before. Our goal is to make the Kelsey, and the ancient world, accessible and relevant to all the region's K-12 students. ■



Each February, the Kelsey Museum is thrilled to host a marathon of a school visit. Hailing from the city of Belleville in Wayne County, Michigan, the McBride Middle School has more than 300 7th-grade students—all of whom come through the Kelsey's galleries and classrooms in the span of four days! These middle schoolers engage in all aspects of the museum, playing ancient board games, getting a taste of excavation with our "Burial Boxes" activity, and touring our exhibitions. In 2024, a steadfast group of nine docents facilitated the McBride field trips, keeping dozens of students moving, thinking, and learning.



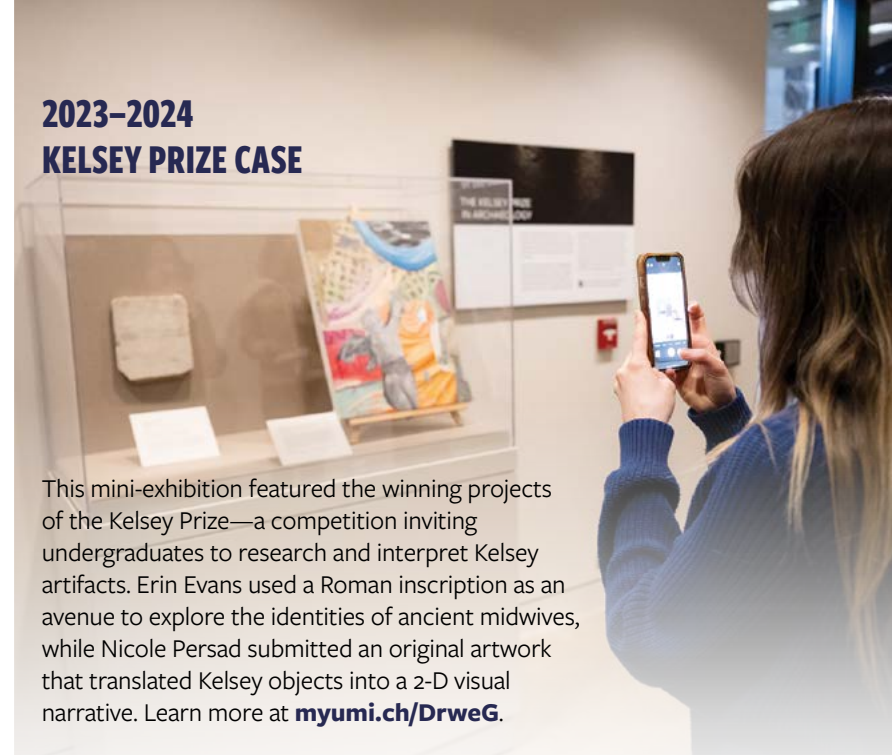
CROSSROADS OF CULTURE: OBJECT SPOTLIGHT #3

The third installment of our Crossroads spotlight series, this exhibition displayed glass vessels, ceramics, coins, and wooden relief panels selected by Kelsey Museum staff. Blending beauty and utility, the chosen artifacts demonstrated the rich cultural and intellectual exchange that occurred among religious and social groups in the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East. View online at myumi.ch/QwrAE.



2023–2024 KELSEY PRIZE CASE

This mini-exhibition featured the winning projects of the Kelsey Prize—a competition inviting undergraduates to research and interpret Kelsey artifacts. Erin Evans used a Roman inscription as an avenue to explore the identities of ancient midwives, while Nicole Persad submitted an original artwork that translated Kelsey objects into a 2-D visual narrative. Learn more at myumi.ch/DrweG.



GLADIATORS: LIFE IN THE ARENA

Popular media often depicts gladiators engaged in big, bloody fights with a significant death toll, but what was life in the Colosseum really like? This exhibit offered a nuanced look into the world of these ancient athletes—examining their lives, deaths, and celebrity status; dispelling myths; and comparing their careers with those of today's professional athletes. View online at myumi.ch/qZ1Wx.



130+

scans of QR codes,
providing access to
additional gladiator
content in the galleries

BACK ROADS AND BEDBUGS: SWAIN'S MEDITERRANEAN ADVENTURES, 1924–1926

As the University of Michigan embarked on important archaeological projects in the 1920s, photographer George R. Swain—aided by two trusty Detroit-made dig cars—was essential in capturing the excavations in progress and a world in flux following the Great War. This exhibit, coinciding with Lauren Talalay's 2024 book, sheds light on Swain's multifaceted role as a photographer and observer. View online at myumi.ch/ZzZQq.



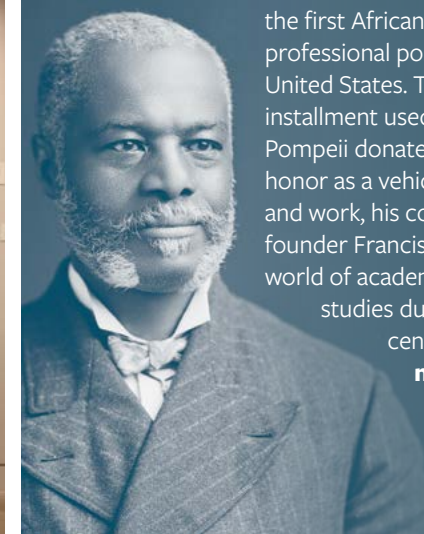
EXHIBITING WENI THE ELDER IN THE SOHAG NATIONAL MUSEUM

This photo show—the sister show to the recently installed exhibition at the Sohag National Museum in Sohag, Egypt—gave visitors an introduction to Michigan's research at Weni the Elder's tomb complex in Abydos and a view into Sohag's Weni exhibition through photographic representations of its key components.



DONATION: A POMPEII TEMPLE RECONSTRUCTED AND ITS HISTORIC HONOREE

William Sanders Scarborough was the first African American to hold a professional position in classics in the United States. This Kelsey in Focus installment used a historic image of Pompeii donated in Scarborough's honor as a vehicle to spotlight his life and work, his connections to museum founder Francis W. Kelsey, and the world of academia and classical studies during the late 19th century. View online at myumi.ch/jJwWQ.



“[Kelsey and Scarborough] were real contemporaries, and their fascination with the ancient world was a unifying element in their lives. Kelsey was well known; Scarborough deserves to be better known.”

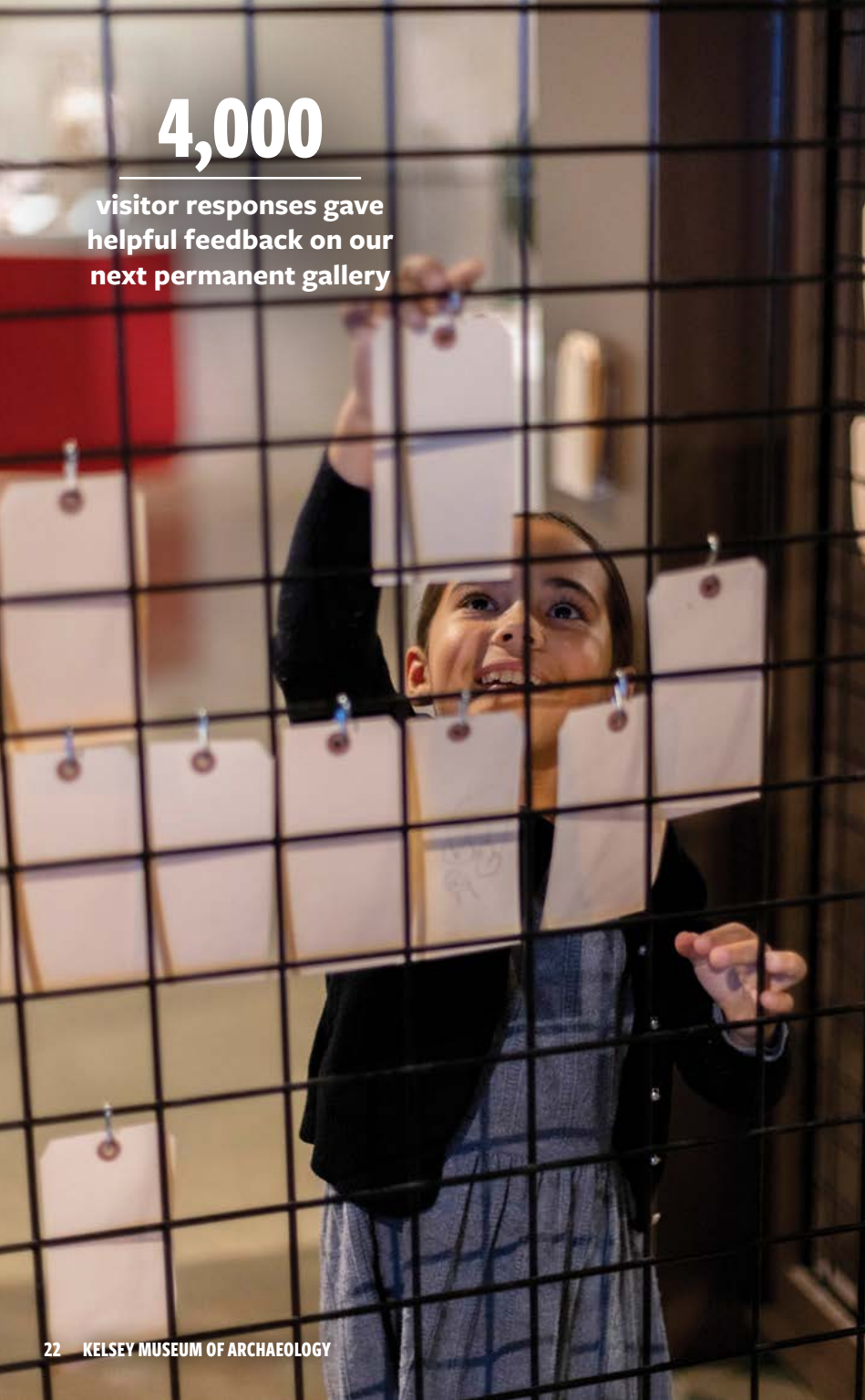
—Professor Michele Valerie Ronnick



In November 2024, the Kelsey Museum partnered with the Michigan and State Theaters to sponsor a special screening of *Gladiator II*. While the sharks were straight out of Hollywood, attendees got a sneak peek into the real lives of Rome's premiere athletes from Shannon Ness and Jennifer Kirker—who promoted the Kelsey in Focus exhibition in the lobby and introduced our museum and research to a new audience!

4,000

visitor responses gave helpful feedback on our next permanent gallery



CRAFTING CONNECTIONS: FROM ARTIFACT TO EXHIBIT

Over the past several years, Kelsey Museum has been preparing for the installation of a permanent space devoted to exhibiting the multiculturalism, religious diversity, and social dynamism characterizing the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East from the 3rd to the 19th century. Beyond the rote logistics of mounting such a display, many interpretive considerations have emerged: Which stories do we tell? How do we tell them? How do we make this vast region and time period legible and meaningful to visitors?

Finding a way to unify myriad cultures, three major world religions, and thousands of artifacts with the potential to tell any number of stories across a period of 1,600 years—not to mention within an exhibit space measuring only approximately 400 square feet—is no small task. In 2024, the Kelsey Museum was grateful to have Katherine Burge leading the charge. A postdoctoral fellow, lecturer in the History of Art Department, and archaeologist specializing in the ancient Middle East and eastern Mediterranean, Katherine serves as lead curator of our Crossroads of Culture gallery.

Katherine and a team of Kelsey colleagues—Laura Motta, Will Pestle, Janet Richards, and graduate students Sam Ross and Heidi Hilliker—spent the better part of the last year working on defining gallery themes and selecting objects to illustrate them (see the

sidebar to the right for a preview). While most of the objects selected come from the Kelsey’s own collection, the curators also identified a number of artifacts to complement this material from repositories across campus, including objects from the Museum of Art (UMMA), the Museum of Anthropological Archaeology (UMMAA), and special collections housed within the U-M Library, such as Papyrology and Islamic Manuscripts.

Because Southeast Michigan and the university are home to numerous communities that trace their roots, heritage, or faith to the Middle East and North Africa, the curatorial team thought it imperative that community voices help inform the content and delivery of Crossroads. To this end, the Kelsey’s Education Department, with the gracious assistance of the Office of Student Conflict Resolution (OSCR), carried out a series of listening circles offered to more than 30 campus and community groups. The advice, stories, and input of the circles’ participants will help inform the design and content of the exhibit and shape its associated programming for years to come. ■

“One of the most rewarding parts of [the Crossroads project] has been its collaborative structure. I have enjoyed working with colleagues within the Kelsey, across campus, and our broader community.”

—Heidi Hilliker, graduate student and curatorial assistant

As the curatorial team continues to refine its object list and groupings, here is a sneak peek at some artifacts and themes they plan to include:





“During my time working at the Kelsey, I have been actively involved in event planning, educational outreach events for children, and developing student-targeted programming, teaching me how to engage with different audiences effectively.”

—Greta Gmazel,
business administration
and museum studies
student

STUDENT ASSISTANTS: ENRICHING THE MUSEUM AND THEMSELVES

Behind every event, mailing, and special project at the Kelsey Museum are a bevy of administrative tasks that need to be completed...by someone. These tasks—from stuffing envelopes to organizing storage spaces to working with catering companies to providing closed captioning for recorded content—are often unseen, sometimes unglamorous, and always essential to the success of each endeavor.

In 2024, we were grateful to have five dedicated student assistants whose museum-wide contributions were instrumental in supporting the Kelsey’s capacity and operations. Their cross-departmental work has improved organizational efficiency, enhanced visitor engagement, and expanded the museum’s digital and educational outreach. All the while, the Kelsey has provided them with hands-on experience, allowing them to develop professional skills, clarify their career interests, and bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world application. ■

“This position has helped to solidify my passion for museum work. I’m excited to continue learning more about the everyday workings of the Kelsey and grateful for the opportunity to begin pursuing my career interest in museum administration.”

—Leyla Dumke,
classical civilization
and communications
student



ON THE FRONT LINES OF DATA COLLECTION

In addition to their oft-hidden administrative roles, these work-study students are helping the Kelsey Museum become more engaged with, and responsive to, our visitors and the community at large. Stationed in the galleries, they collect data about our patrons and their experience in the museum—data we are already using to inform decisions about exhibitions and programming. ■



Dhanya Kolisetti, an undergrad student studying environmental science, has found unexpected connections between her field and archaeology. Dhanya’s work in transcribing lectures and surveying visitors has not only made archaeological knowledge more accessible but also enhanced her skills in communication and data analysis, which are crucial for her future in environmental science.



Lily Zamora, a communications and media senior, has played a pivotal role in contributing to the Kelsey’s social media presence and event planning. Through contacting vendors, designing activities, and overseeing the day-of execution of events, she has developed many skills that will be valuable in the future—especially how to delegate tasks and ask for help if she needs it.



Tanner Beals initially doubted the relevance of museum work to his field but has since been “happily proven wrong.” The Kelsey Museum has benefited his academic interests as an urban planning graduate student largely by learning about the everyday lives and cultures of the ancient Mediterranean, while his interactions with faculty and docents have enriched his academic perspective.

LIBRARY UPGRADES: ENHANCING SPACE, ACCESS, AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

This past year, the Kelsey Museum Library underwent a significant transformation to better serve its academic community and optimize its operational capacity. The upgrades included the installation of new carpeting, the addition of new bookshelves, and the introduction of modern, ergonomic furniture designed to create a warm and inviting atmosphere. These enhancements, paired with the iconic Tiffany window as the room's centerpiece, provide a serene and inspiring environment for study and reflection.

The library's upgrades also align with our commitments to inclusivity and accessibility—as it is now open to all University of Michigan graduate students—as well as ongoing efforts to improve the space's collections and usability. Curator Nicola Barham, IPAMAA student Erica Venturo, and the Kelsey student administrative team have partnered to undertake a comprehensive project to classify, catalog, shelf, and label the collection, ensuring that the library remains a vital resource for research and study. ■

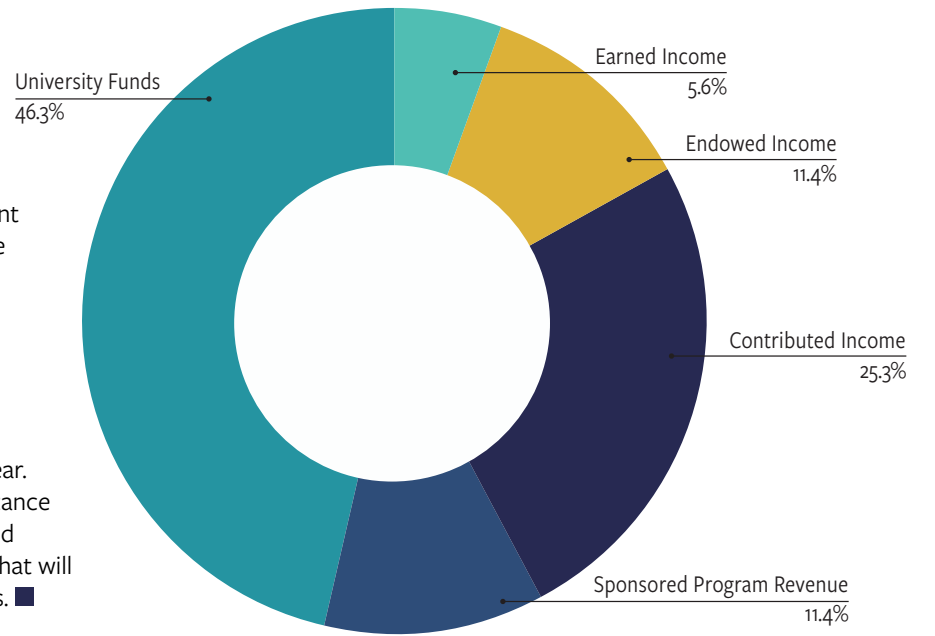
THE KELSEY MUSEUM'S FINANCIAL STATE

The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology concluded 2024 in a stable financial position, characterized by prudent spending and strategic fiscal planning. As the museum looks ahead, it remains dedicated to responsible financial management and strategic investments in its core mission areas that will ensure its legacy as a leader in archaeology, education, and undergraduate experience for years to come. ■

2024 REVENUE SOURCES

Total Revenue: \$3.67 million

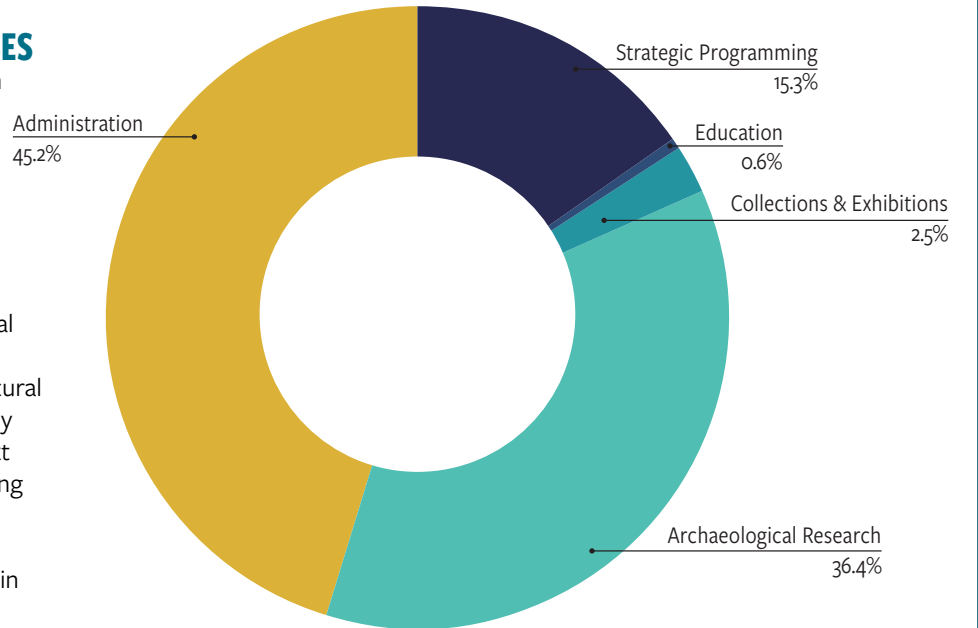
In 2024, U-M contributed \$1.7 million to the Kelsey Museum. Such university support—consistent with previous years—highlights the museum's vital position within the campus and academic community. Thanks to the Klinsky gift (see pp. 28–29) and funding for other archaeological field projects, contributed income experienced remarkable growth over the last year. This surge underscores the importance of external funding for research and educational initiatives—priorities that will drive our future fundraising efforts. ■



2024 OPERATING EXPENSES

Total Expenses: \$3.30 million

The operating expenses for 2024 reflect the museum's commitment to maintaining core functions and advancing strategic priorities. The majority of the budget was allocated to administration and archaeological research, allowing the Kelsey to operate effectively as both a cultural institution and a hub for scholarly exploration. Our goal for the next year is to expand expenses relating to educational programming—reflecting the essential role of outreach, teaching, and learning in the success of our institution. ■





Excavations at
Jebel Barkal, Sudan.

THE KLINSKY EXPEDITIONS: A CATALYST FOR INNOVATION

Rome’s conquest over Carthage was a pivotal moment in the growth of its imperial rule—but where did this battle take place? What can we learn from a never-before-seen ancient settlement submerged beneath Lake Huron’s cold depths? And where exactly in Africa did our species evolve?

In late 2024, archaeologists at the University of Michigan moved one step closer to answering these wide-ranging and ambitious questions. Thanks to a generous donation from Steve Klinsky—founder and CEO of New Mountain Capital and a 1976 graduate of U-M—five faculty-led field projects will launch across Africa, Asia, and North America in the hope of answering some of the world’s remaining archaeological mysteries.

The projects selected for funding, dubbed “The Klinsky Expeditions,” were chosen because of their broad implications on human history. In addition to having educational and scientific merit, these projects have a “discovery value” that will resonate with, and stimulate the imaginations of, the general public.

“The Klinsky Expeditions reflect the sheer strength and variety of archaeology at Michigan,” noted Kelsey director Nic Terrenato. “They encompass an incredible diversity of places, time periods, and approaches, from the difficult idea of conducting fieldwork in a war zone to looking for a site you don’t even know is there.”

In addition to supporting cutting-edge archaeological research, the Klinsky donation includes generous funding for dedicated K–12 educational programming to accompany each of the five expeditions. The Kelsey Museum’s Education Department is currently working with the expedition PIs and our Teacher Advisory Group to design programs and curricula that will directly connect students—in Ann Arbor and across the country—with the various projects and use their respective area of focus to support teachers as they address major historical and contemporary subjects in their classrooms. ■

FINDING ANCIENT NAPATA: LOST CITY ON THE NILE

PI: Geoff Emberling

This Klinsky Expedition will investigate Napata—located along the Nile River in northern Sudan—to produce an innovative and holistic reconstruction of this great ancient city.

NOMADIC ELITES AT THE DAWN OF THE SILK ROADS

PI: Bryan Miller

This expedition team will head to Kazakhstan in Central Asia to search the burial sites of Eurasian nomads—creators of sophisticated societies and innovators of trade and exchange.

ANCIENT HUNTING SITES BENEATH THE GREAT LAKES

PI: John O’Shea

Using new and innovative submarine technology, this Klinsky Expedition will seek an 11,500-year-old underwater and undiscovered country that sits at the bottom of Lake Huron.

PINPOINTING OUR AFRICAN ORIGINS WITH ANCIENT DNA

PI: Brian Stewart

The project will extract DNA from jewelry worn by the earliest humans and sediments from the places they lived to get a better understanding of the origins of our species in Africa.

BATTLEFIELDS OF THE PUNIC WARS

PI: David Stone

For this project, the team will travel to search for lost battlefields in the wars between Rome and Carthage that marked the beginning of Rome’s dominance of the Mediterranean.



“The University of Michigan and the Kelsey Museum offer one of the greatest archaeology programs in the world. As a Michigan native, U-M alumnus, and lifelong lover of history and archaeology, I am pleased to support them.”

—Steve Klinsky

Read more about the five Klinsky Expeditions and their directors on the Kelsey Museum’s website: myumi.ch/dgAk7.



COMMUNITY BUILDING STARTS WITH YOU!

In 2024, the Kelsey Museum received approximately \$1.5 million in gifts from 200 distinct donors. These contributions help the Kelsey realize its mission, allowing us to share the ancient Mediterranean world and build community today.

Often, gifts to the Kelsey Museum are restricted in support of a specific project or program. This year, for example, we received \$1 million for five specific archaeological field projects. Other gifts, such as our Strategic Programs Fund, are unrestricted in nature, allowing us to devote

financial support where it is needed most—whether that be exhibitions, education, conservation, curation, or research.

Strategic planning identified the need to increase and diversify our sources of contributed income to strengthen the museum's financial foundation and provide the additional support needed to achieve the plan's goals. From a revised membership program to increased grant proposals and named giving opportunities, the Kelsey is excited about the plans to expand its fundraising. ■

Named gifts are a wonderful way to provide support for the Kelsey while preserving the legacy and memory of an important figure in the museum's history. The Clark Hopkins Kelsey Museum Fund, for instance, was established in 2012 in honor of a Kelsey archaeologist (and Michigan faculty) who led excavations at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, Iraq, in the 1930s. Annual contributions ensure that meaningful growth and distributions are available to the museum as needed.

REIMAGINING MEMBERSHIP: INVITING YOU INTO THE HEART OF THE KELSEY MUSEUM

Building museum membership and expanding our community is a core goal of the Kelsey's strategic plan. Just as members have been essential to our past and present successes, they are crucial to our new mission and our future.

In 2024, we began reimagining our membership program to offer a diverse range of benefits and new inroads into the Kelsey's activities. This reanimated program, which will debut in 2025–2026, will provide members with insider access to our dynamic work, from exhibition opening receptions to members-only object-handling sessions to lunch with curators and pre-lecture dinners with visiting speakers.

We deeply appreciate the support of our members and hope that these revamped benefits will not only bring new members into our community but also reward dedicated supporters with increased access to—and engagement with—all the exciting archaeological work happening at the Kelsey. ■

“*The Kelsey offers something about the human experience across the centuries. It helps build empathy and wonder and just a general idea of where we came from and how where we're going is...not so different than where we've been. The Kelsey is a place to go and reconnect with being human.*”

—Thea Bilich, undergraduate student

85

members supported
the Kelsey in 2024





Students in Laura Motta's ARCHAM 333 course clean animal bones from Tel Anafa as part of their zooarchaeology practicum, October 2024.



Washing pottery in the Finds Lab at Gabii, Italy, summer 2024.



Visiting scholar Annette Hansen examines seeds from Karanis, May 2024.



Middle East Studies student Heidi Hilliker with Abydos Middle Cemetery Project epigrapher Rasha Hany Ahmed in the Weni the Elder exhibition at the Sohag National Museum in Egypt, December 2024.



Photographer Sally Bjork captures images of textiles from the Kelsey Museum's collection, May 2024.



IPAMAA students Theo Nash, Erica Venturo, Chloe Morris, and Sam Ross view the gladiator exhibition at the Saturnalia Celebration and Open House, December 2024.

ABOUT THE KELSEY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology has explored the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East since 1928—bringing the ancient world to life for generations of Michigan students, faculty, and staff. An internationally recognized institution, the Kelsey supports active archaeological fieldwork, advancing public and scholarly access to its collections through publications in diverse media and dynamic museum exhibitions and programs.



University Programs
Coordinator Shannon
Ness gives U-M students
a closeup view of ancient
inscriptions as part of
the Kelsey Museum's
object-handling program.