

The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology Newsletter

Spring 2020



On the Cover

Red-figure kotyle

Clay

18.1 x 9.2 cm

ca. 450–400 BCE

Marburg Collection, purchase 1923

KM 2608

This Greek kotyle (drinking cup) has been a staff and visitor favorite for many years, and the charming owl that graces its side has become the unofficial mascot of the Kelsey gift shop. Turn to page 12 to learn the story behind this little cup.



The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology Newsletter

Spring 2020

KELSEY MUSEUM STAFF

Nicola Barham, *Assistant Curator of Ancient Art*
Jake Bennett, *Security Officer*
Charlie Brown, *Custodian*
Eric Campbell, *Assistant Exhibition Designer*
Keith Dalton, *Security Officer*
Suzanne Davis, *Curator of Conservation*
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Michelle Fontenot, *Collections Manager*
Elaine K. Gazda, *Curator Emerita*
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Caroline Roberts, *Conservator*
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Lisa Rozek, *Administrative Specialist*
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Matthew Spunar, *Security Officer*
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Lauren E. Talalay, *Curator Emerita*
Terry G. Wilfong, *Director, Curator of Graeco-Roman
Egyptian Collections*
John Williams, *Security Supervisor*
Mallory Wolgram, *Security Officer*
Alex Zwinak, *Graduate Program Coordinator*

KELSEY MUSEUM RESEARCH ASSOCIATES AND AFFILIATES

Natalie Abell	Despina Margomenou
Gary Beckman	Lisa Nevett
Jay Crisostomo	Christopher Ratté
Katherine Davis	Ann van Rosevelt
Clayton Fant	Carola Stearns
Linda Gosner	David Stone
Christiane Gruber	Nicola Terrenato
Brendan Haug	Arthur Verhoogt
Artemis Leontis	Robert Wenke

INFORMATION

Web: lsa.umich.edu/kelsey
Phone: 734-764-9304

GALLERY & GIFT SHOP HOURS

The Kelsey Museum's galleries are closed until further notice, and all events and programs have been canceled. In the meantime, please explore and enjoy our online exhibitions and educational resources.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN REGENTS

Jordan B. Acker	Sauna Ryder Diggs
Michael J. Behm	Denise Ilitch
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Mark S. Schlissel, *ex officio*

From the Director

Dear Friends,

I usually begin making notes on the letter from the Kelsey director months before the Newsletter comes out, to keep track of things that I want to talk about. And for this issue I had started making notes about what I thought would be coming in the months ahead. Little did I know what was in store for us . . . For the first time in its history, the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology has had to close its doors because of an international pandemic, uncertain of when we will be able to open again. Meanwhile, in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, our world is convulsed with protests as we all must deal with the ugly reality of racism in our society. Events of the past few months have effectively rendered much of what I was going to write about irrelevant. So, instead, I'll tell you about what we did and what we continue doing to keep the Kelsey going, even though we are closed and the staff (except for security and custodial) are working remotely.

The Kelsey Museum closed to the public on March 16, and we wound down staff operations at the museum shortly after that. We were glad to be able to contribute 11,000 of our nitrile gloves, normally used for safe artifact handling, to the U-M Hospital in response to an urgent call for supplies. Our staff have settled into working remotely very quickly. Security and cleaning staff are still entering the building, and we've already had to deal with one building issue (leaking pump), but this went fine, and things are relatively stable for the present. Our staff is adapting wonderfully, and I am very proud of them. Thanks to Dawn Johnson, who has made all of this work!

Throughout the past weeks, we have seen a great benefit from the Emergency Preparedness Exercise that the Kelsey staff did back in the summer of 2018. Although the scenario we ran back then was considerably different from the current situation (it involved damage to the building and its artifacts), it did force us to think about how the museum would continue operations if the building were closed for an indefinite period of time, and this was very valuable preparation. It made us think about how to meet our audience's different needs without access to the museum and also how staff might be able to work remotely and what they might do. When we are back together, we will update our Emergency Preparedness Plan based on our current experiences, the challenges we faced, and the solutions we came up with. I remember feeling anxious through the entirely theoretical exercise we did two years ago, and of course, there have been (and will be) many anxious moments in the present situation, but I think we have felt a lot more confident and prepared than we might have otherwise.

We are reaching out to our audiences through our website and also through a new email template; you will have received the first few of these already. We'll continue to put these out every other week for the foreseeable future. Thanks again to Dawn, and our editor Leslie Schramer and designer Eric Campbell, for putting this together.

We are continuing with regular activities to the extent that we can, and keeping to our exhibition schedule: our new exhibition, *Randal Stegmeyer: Exposing the Past*, opened online on Friday, May 1. Our talented staff has created a virtual exhibition that mimics the look and feel of the planned installation. Although I'm disappointed that this exhibition that I curated will not have a

physical opening, I'm thrilled that we can do this online so effectively. And we will open this distinctive-looking exhibition physically as soon as we can safely do so. (You'll start seeing promotional footers in our email soon!)

There is, as all of you will know, much uncertainty about the future, and it is impossible to say at the moment when and how the Kelsey Museum will be able to reopen. We are, of course, beginning to discuss possibilities and scenarios, but will be dependent on LSA for guidance and permission. We are very lucky to have the backing of LSA and the university, which has allowed us to keep operations going and to envision reopening. The future is very uncertain, but I remain optimistic.

When we return to the Kelsey Museum, it will be in the context of a very different world. Like all of you, we have been angry, saddened, and frustrated about the recent killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and so many others, and the violent and unlawful attacks on protestors and the hateful racist rhetoric that has engulfed our nation in the wake of these events. Coming on top of the COVID-19 crisis, which has also disproportionately affected minorities, these events have been devastating to the Black community. Black Lives Matter.

Our Dean, Anne Curzan, has posted a statement on this subject on the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts website, "We Stand Together: Black Lives Matter" (lsa.umich.edu/lsa/news-events/all-news/search-news/standing-together.html). In this, Anne addresses very eloquently the grief, anger, and frustration that we have been feeling. But she also outlines concrete steps that the College and the University of Michigan are taking to address the immediate crisis, as well as the much larger systemic issues of racism and injustice in our society. The Kelsey Museum is a part of the College's and University's efforts: we have unique resources to contribute and we will need your help and support.

One thing unrelated to the current crises that I feel it is very important for me to note: longtime Kelsey Museum curator (as well as director of the museum from 1986 to 1997 and professor in History of Art) Elaine K. Gazda retired from the university on May 31 after a long and distinguished career of 46 years of service and scholarship at the University of Michigan and the Kelsey Museum. Elaine came to Ann Arbor in 1974, when she was hired as assistant professor in History of Art and assistant curator at the Kelsey Museum — joint appointments through which she was promoted over the years. Elaine has curated an astonishing twenty-nine exhibitions at the Kelsey in her time here, many with her students and most involving

published catalogues, on top of which she was the head curator for the entire permanent installation in the Kelsey's Upjohn Exhibit Wing. Elaine's exhibitions have covered a wide range of topics, but all have been characterized by a combination of serious scholarship and visual flair and elegance. As I know from my time as in charge of Kelsey publications, Elaine is the author of our three bestselling books (*Karanis*, *Villa of the Mysteries*, and *Leisure and Luxury*) and has been an extraordinary fundraiser and advocate for the museum. And of course she has had a distinguished career as a teacher and mentor: many of her former students are now leaders in their fields, many of whom celebrated Elaine's career in a recent Archaeological Institute of America panel and a publication of studies in her honor. I have particular reason to be grateful to Elaine: she hired me, along with Janet Richards, in 1994, and worked hard to keep us here, eventually masterminding the joint appointments that we continue to hold between the Kelsey and the Department of Middle East Studies. Although Elaine is retiring, she will now become emerita curator at the Kelsey and has embarked on an ambitious program of research that will keep her coming in to the Kelsey for many years to come. When we can safely meet again at the Kelsey, I hope we can celebrate her retirement and career properly, and you are all invited!

There were a few other things I had planned to mention in my letter that have instead become brief articles for this issue: the story of the new logo for the Kelsey gift shop, and a memorable field trip recently made by Kelsey staff to one of our neighbors.

And finally: my term as director of the Kelsey Museum ends June 30, after which I will be taking a long-deferred sabbatical leave. Thanks to all of you for your support and encouragement over the past three years. It's been a great pleasure working with you all as director, but I am looking forward to concentrating on my curatorial work when I return from leave. I am pleased to inform you that Nic Terrenato, head of the Gabii Project and professor in the Department of Classical Studies, has been appointed as the new director of the Kelsey Museum. I hope you will all welcome Nic to his new role.

I look forward to the day when we can welcome you back to the Kelsey Museum. For now, enjoy our online offerings and the articles in this Newsletter, and I hope you all are safe and well.

Terry G. Wilfong
Director and Curator

Elaine Gazda Retires

Elaine K. Gazda, longtime Kelsey curator, professor in History of Art, and director of the Kelsey Museum from 1986 to 1997, retired from the University of Michigan on May 31 after 46 years of scholarship and service. Elaine came to Ann Arbor in 1974, when she was hired as assistant professor in History of Art and assistant curator at the Kelsey Museum — joint appointments through which she was promoted over the years. Elaine has curated an impressive 29 exhibitions at the Kelsey in her time here, many with her students and most involving published catalogues. She was also the head curator for the entire installation of the Kelsey's new Upjohn Exhibit Wing. Elaine's exhibitions have covered a wide range of topics, but all have been characterized by a combination

of serious scholarship and visual flair and elegance.

Elaine is the author of our three bestselling books — *Karanis: An Egyptian Town in Roman Times*, *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*, and *Leisure and Luxury in the Age of Nero: The Villas of Oplontis near Pompeii* — and has also been an extraordinary fundraiser and advocate for the museum. And of course, she has had a distinguished career as a teacher and mentor. Many of her former students, now leaders in their fields, celebrated Elaine's career in a recent Archaeological Institute of America panel and a publication of studies in her honor. Elaine is now curator emerita at the Kelsey and has embarked on an ambitious program of research that will keep her coming to



the museum for many years. When we can safely meet again, we will celebrate her retirement and career properly, and you are all invited!

The Kelsey Blog Has Moved!

The Kelsey blog is now being hosted by the U-M LSA WordPress platform. You will notice a slightly different look, but the content will remain the same. Posts from the Archives, the Conservation Lab, and (everyone's favorite) the Ugly Object of the Month will still arrive in your inbox – but only if you resubscribe at the new address! All the older content has also been migrated to the new location, so feel free to delete that old bookmark.

Find us at our new home:
sites.lsa.umich.edu/kelsey-museum-blog

Michigan Photography

On March 16, just days before the Kelsey went completely remote, Austin Thomason from Michigan Photography spent the day with us photographing the Kelsey's collection and building (and a few staff members who had not yet gone remote). The new photographs are stunning — you may have already noticed them on our website and social media posts, and they will soon appear in our publications and marketing materials.

Many thanks to Austin and the Kelsey staff that assisted him. We are looking forward to working with Austin more in the future and discovering our building and its treasures anew through his sophisticated and creative eye.



Austin Thomason taking photographs in the Kelsey's collection storage on March 16. Photo by Leslie Schramer.

Kelsey Researchers Receive Grant from U-M Humanities Collaboratory

The Kelsey Museum's archaeological projects in Sudan and Egypt just received a development grant from the University of Michigan Humanities Collaboratory for a project entitled "Nubian Lives, Nubian Heritage." The development grant will support a number of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates in discussions and research about heritage and contemporary culture in Nubia — southern Egypt and northern Sudan. This development grant will lead to an opportunity to apply for a large grant (up to \$500,000) to put these ideas into practice.

The project grew out of a conversation between assistant professor of anthropology Yasmin Moll, who is working on

an ethnographic film about Nubian cultural activism in Egypt, and Geoff Emberling and Suzanne Davis of the Kelsey, who have been working on a community heritage project at the ancient royal pyramid cemetery of El-Kurru in northern Sudan. Kelsey curator Janet Richards will also contribute her knowledge of Nubian heritage in Egypt. Other faculty team members are Amal Fadlalla (Women's Studies), Andrew Shryock (Anthropology), Michael Fahy (Education), and Howard Tsai (International Institute).

Jackier Prize Winners

The Jackier Prize winners for 2019–2020 are Rachel Heibel, a second-year majoring in art and design with an intended minor in sustainability; Estrella Salgado, a third-year majoring in history with a minor in museum studies; Anna Southon, a second-year in the LSA honors program planning to major in public policy and minor in environment; Victoria Thede, a third-year double majoring in history and art history; and Jaymes Walker, a second-year at the STAMPs school of art and design.

Due to the museum closure this spring we were unable to mount the Jackier Prize exhibition or celebrate the winners in a ceremony at the Kelsey. The Jackier exhibition case is ready to be installed and will go on view as soon as we open our doors again. In the meantime, you can view the prize-winning projects on our website, lsa.umich.edu/kelsey/education.



Clockwise from top left: Rachel Heibel, Estrella Salgado, Jaymes Walker, Victoria Thede, and Anna Southon.

Connecting Collections

Wednesday, May 27, marked the first day of **#ConnectingCollections**, an initiative directed at bridging institutions with object collections from the ancient world. We will use this hashtag on Instagram to call out posts that explore various shared themes, artifact types, and histories among participating institutions. Posts are planned for the last Wednesday of the month, so please mark your digital calendars!

Our inaugural posts focused on the theme, “Here’s looking at you,” with institutions posting objects with prominent eyes. We shared one of our favorite artifacts: a bone figurine excavated at Seleucia on the Tigris, Iraq (KM 16188). It is one of almost sixty similar fetishes in the Kelsey collection, each one with a fierce facial expression.

The founding members of **#ConnectingCollections** include the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East (@harvardmuseum), the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology (@kelseymuseum), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Ancient Departments) (@metancient/@metmuseum), the Penn Museum (@pennmuseum), the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago (@theorientalinstitute), and the Yale Babylonian Collection (@yalebabyloniancollection), and we are continuing to grow as you read this! Currently we are focusing our efforts on Instagram, but we hope to expand to Twitter in due course. Please follow these institutions on social media and engage with **#ConnectingCollections**.

If you are associated with an institution that has an object collection from the ancient world and would like to participate in **#ConnectingCollections**, we would love to hear from you. [Please contact us.](#)



Fieldwork Directors on COVID-19

We asked our field directors how COVID-19 has impacted their archaeological projects and how they are adjusting to the new reality the pandemic presents. Here are their responses.

Geoff Emberling, El-Kurru, Sudan

As far as excavation goes, COVID-19 mainly brings uncertainties. Will there be another spike in cases either here or in our host country? If so, when will that happen? Will the US or our host country continue to impose travel restrictions? To what extent will the economy limit funding possibilities? Will university policies continue to restrict travel and/or spending?

For us working in Sudan, being located at a significant distance from well-equipped hospitals, the threshold of safety will be high. Although I hold out vague hope that the situation might work out somehow to allow us into the field in winter 2021, I think it is likely that we will not be able to make fieldwork plans until there is a vaccine.

Lisa Nevett, Olynthos Project

The Olynthos Project’s first study season, originally planned for July 2020, has had to be postponed until July 2021. We had also planned a symposium in which project members will come together to share their analyses in preparation for the final publication. This was originally scheduled to be held in Athens in April 2021 but we are now looking at dates in fall 2021. In the meantime, we are using our archival materials to begin the task of writing up our fieldwork.

Christopher Ratté, Notion Project

The Notion team is taking advantage of this summer’s enforced hiatus in fieldwork to make progress on the publication of the results of the survey begun in 2014. Fortunately, we completed fieldwork for the survey in 2018, and finished study of the objects in 2019, so we do not need to go back into the field for this purpose. We had planned to begin excavations this summer, and we still hope that will be possible in 2021. Of course, much will be different. Archaeologists are accustomed to living and working in very close quarters, and we will have to figure out how to adapt to new realities. It will also be interesting to see how the pandemic overlaps with Turkish cultural policy toward foreign researchers — but we are hopeful that in close collaboration with our Turkish colleagues we will be able to continue to work at this beautiful and remarkable site.

Interview with the Artist

Randal Stegmeyer

Over the years, University of Michigan Library photographer Randal Stegmeyer has created many memorable images of Kelsey Museum artifacts. On the occasion of his retirement, the Kelsey presents *Randal Stegmeyer: Exposing the Past*, a retrospective of Randal's professional and personal photography projects. In this interview, Randal discusses the path that brought him to a career in photography, what he plans to do in retirement, and the photographers who inspire him.



Kelsey Museum: *What have been your favorite photography projects?*

Randal Stegmeyer: What really excites me about what I do is being able to handle and explore in great detail the amazing objects in the U-M collections. The handwritten letter by Galileo, a 3,000-year-old scroll of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the Civil

War diary of a Michigan soldier, the Djehutymose coffin — these all take my breath away. To be granted access to these rarities and be entrusted to create an accurate visual description of each has been the great honor and privilege of my career.

KM: *How did you discover your passion for photography and how did it develop? How did you originally connect with the Kelsey Museum?*

RS: I think I'm hardwired to be a visual artist. When I was 13 years old, my dad gave me my first camera, his old Argus C3, and something just clicked. From that moment, I've made photographs as a way to explore the world. Later in life, when I found myself in a dead-end job and needing to choose a different direction, I happened upon a newspaper article about the profession of medical photographer. Having a keen interest in photography and being a science nerd as well, this led me to the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, where I earned a BFA in applied photography with a major in the medical track. I worked in the medical field for a few years, but then that door closed as another one opened, and I found myself working at the Detroit Institute of Arts, learning the ins and outs of cultural heritage photography. After leaving the DIA, I started my own business, Spectrum Imaging. I did a lot of work for UMMA, who then referred the Kelsey to me when they were casting about for a new photographer for their collection. Soon after gaining the Kelsey as a client, a new position



Figure 1. Civil War diary of William Harrison Marshall, a soldier of the 18th Michigan Infantry Regiment (Bentley Historical Library).

in the University Library was created and the rest, as they say, is history.

KM: *What is one project you would love to do?*

RS: The Library has an extensive collection of Artist Books, a fascinating collection of books as *objets d'art*. I started to document them last fall, but the librarian in charge of the project left for another position, and the work is now on hold. I doubt I will have the opportunity to complete it.

KM: *What are your plans for your upcoming "retirement"?*

RS: Well, I have a bucket list (everybody should have a bucket list) that is mostly places I would like to see. Going someplace I've never been before and exploring it through my lenses is one of my all-time favorite things to do. So, travel, for sure.

The only downside to my career is that it has been very isolating. I have spent many years working alone in a windowless room. I am very much looking forward to spending a lot more time out of doors and finding new ways to connect with people.

KM: *What photographers and artists inspire you? What aspects of their work*



Figure 2. Coffin of Djehutmose: exterior of lid (KM 1989.3.1).

have you incorporated into your approaches to photography?

RS: I think that documentary photographers and photojournalists are the cream of the crop within the photographic profession. Historically, Henri Cartier-Bresson, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) photographers of the Great Depression, Garry Winogrand, Gordon Parks, and Elliot Erwitt have all inspired me and

provided a visual foundation that has informed my work throughout my career. I currently use Instagram to bring new and inspiring images to my eyes. I follow Peter and David Turnley, Matt Black, Byron Denton, and a few others. This type of photography has the power to change the world, to bend the course of history, and on many occasions it has. What I like most about working in this style is that here, photography is an active and participatory event. Unlike studio work, which could be viewed as an "objective" pursuit, capturing moments as I move through life with my camera is a wholly subjective experience. The camera's ability to take a slice out of life fascinates me. In my personal work, I strive for a "decisive image" that "... stops movement but also preserves thought." ▲



Figure 3. Wellness Bus, West Grand Boulevard, Detroit, 1988.

Randal Stegmeyer: Exposing the Past is available to view online at exhibitions.kelsey.lsa.umich.edu/randal-stegmeyer

Kelsey Neighbors

The Maize & Blue Cupboard

By Terry G. Wilfong

It seems like years now, but it was only a few months ago, in early March, that Kelsey Museum staff members and IPCAA students were given a tour of the Maize & Blue Cupboard, a near neighbor of ours just up Maynard Street, that provides food, services, and help to students and others in need. Those of us who went were struck by this remarkable organization and its urgent mission, and I wanted to share with you, the wider Kelsey community, something about what we learned and how we can help.

It is a troubling but relatively little-known fact that as many as one in three University of Michigan students experience food insecurity in some way at some point during their time in Ann Arbor. The Maize & Blue Cupboard is a Student Life organization at U-M dedicated to ensuring that “members of the University of Michigan community, whether on a tight budget or physically restrained from getting to a grocery store, receive equitable access to healthy, nutritious, and nourishing food and the ability to prepare it for themselves or others.” The Cupboard does this by

providing food, kitchen and personal items, education, and support to anyone with a University of Michigan ID, no questions asked. Those of us who visited the Maize & Blue Cupboard were privileged to see what this amazing organization does, but were also sobered by the need for such an organization at our university.

The Kelsey Museum first connected with the Cupboard over a very prosaic matter: trash dumpsters. Our dumpsters began mysteriously overflowing; when we investigated, we discovered it was because nearby dorm Betsy Barbour House had eliminated its own dumpsters so that the new Maize & Blue Cupboard could use its basement area for its facilities, and were therefore having to use the Kelsey’s dumpsters. We quickly resolved the trash issue and, in the process, became very interested in the Cupboard and its mission. So Kelsey Museum Associate Director Dawn Johnson arranged for us to take a tour, with the help of Joshua Burd, the building facilities manager for West Quad, Betsy Barbour, and Helen Newberry.

We were toured through the facility by Maize & Blue Cupboard Program Manager Jessica Thompson, who brings equal measures of expertise, compassion, and enthusiasm to her work. The Cupboard is set up like a grocery store. Anyone who shows their U-M ID can fill a basket with whatever items they need, bag them, and take them away. Like a grocery store, the Cupboard has sections for produce, bakery goods, frozen food, canned food and other shelf-stable items, as well as a separate section for personal items and toiletries, kitchen items, and cookware. Much of the food is provided by Food Gatherers, but non-perishable food and other items also come from donations in cash and in kind. The shelves were well stocked and well organized with a wide range of products, and the presentation was inviting. The Maize & Blue Cupboard is open 3–7 p.m. Monday–Friday, and noon–3 p.m. Saturday–Sunday, open hours



Above: Maize & Blue Cupboard Program Manager Jessica Thompson.

Opposite: Views of the stocked shelves in the Cupboard. Photos by Leslie Schramer.



signaled with a signboard visible from the Maynard Street sidewalk. (In off-hours, staff and volunteers are busy receiving, processing, and organizing donations, as well as giving tours and other promotional activities.)

The Maize & Blue Cupboard is not just a food pantry, though, and Jessica Thompson took us through additional areas that serve its wider functions. A conference room is already getting active use by student organizers and other groups dedicated to helping the Cupboard's mission. In preparation is a more ambitious space — a kitchen and food prep area that will ultimately host cooking classes and demonstrations, designed to help students and others with food insecurity learn valuable food skills.

We came away from our tour deeply impressed, moved, and energized, and I know people from our

group have already donated money, materials, and time to the Maize & Blue Cupboard.

Since our visit in March, the Maize & Blue Cupboard has changed some of its procedures due to the COVID-19 crisis. However, it is still active and still dedicated to meeting the needs of students and others experiencing food insecurity. Under normal circumstances, spring and summer are particular times of need, but the disruptions to food supply and access caused by the pandemic must make the Maize & Blue Cupboard's mission even more urgent. I encourage you to check out their website and see how you can help this vital effort. ▲

Learn More

Visit the Maize & Blue Cupboard website to learn more about what they do and how you can get involved.

mbc.studentlife.umich.edu

Terry G. Wilfong is the director of the Kelsey Museum and its curator of Graeco-Roman Egyptian Collections.

IPCAA Kudos

Caitlin Clerkin has been named the David and Mary Hunting Graduate Fellow for 2020–21 at U-M's Institute for the Humanities. Caitlin and a cohort of seven other U-M graduate fellows and eight faculty fellows will spend the 2020–21 academic year in residence at the Institute, forming an interdisciplinary intellectual community as they pursue original research and participate in regular, cross-disciplinary fellows' seminars. Caitlin's dissertation project, "Hellenistic and Early Parthian Seleucia-on-the-Tigris Revisited," which will occupy her at the Institute, is focused on Kelsey Museum archaeological and archival collections.

Alexandra Creola received a Fulbright Award for Italy during the 2020–2021 academic year for her project "Roman Nymphs and the Underworld: Landscape, Religion, and Identity in Southern Italy." Alexandra will spend nine months in southern Italy, working in coordination with scholars at the Università della Calabria, visiting archaeological sites and museums, and talking to local community members about nymphs in regional folklore. Traditionally, scholars have viewed the concept of Roman nymphs as a result of the transposition of Greek ideas into ancient Italy. Alexandra's study refocuses the narrative and investigates the southern Italic landscape through a local understanding of indigenous, sacred places.

Christina DiFabio received a PhD fellowship at Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED) in Istanbul for the 2020–2021 academic year. She is not sure yet if she will be able to go, but it seems like for now they are planning for a normal program.

On May 18, **Matthew Naglak** successfully defended his dissertation, "Activity and Rhythms in Roman Fora in the Republican and Early Imperial Periods." At the end of the summer he will be relocating to Boston, where he will begin his new position as a Digital Scholarship Librarian at Boston College, helping faculty and students with digital publication projects.

Zoe Ortiz won a Fulbright for her project "Restoring the Restored: Revealing the Role of the Gabii Sculptures from Antiquity to Today." As a Fulbright scholar, Zoe will conduct research at the Vatican Secret Archives, which houses numerous documents concerning the restorations carried out on an assemblage of marbles from the ancient Roman city of Gabii.

On March 11, **Arianna Zapeloni Pavia** defended her dissertation, "Cultural Change in the Religious Sphere of Ancient Umbria between the 6th and the 1st Centuries BCE."

Staff Updates

On Sunday, May 24, Collections Manager **Michelle Fontenot** drove out to the Midland County Historical Society Doan Center in Midland, Michigan, to lend a hand after the flooding. She was able to assist in removing everything from the basement of the Bradley Home (nineteenth-century Victorian). She also helped pack books located on the first floor. The basement had flooded entirely while the first floor had an inch of water. To read more about his effort, visit greatlakesnow.org/2020/05/rescuing-history-museum-michigan-midland-flooding.

On March 10 and 11, Curator of Hellenistic and Roman Collections **Elaine Gazda** gave a workshop, Women of the Villa of the Mysteries: Social Contexts of the Bacchic Murals in Room 5 and Beyond, at the Dallas Museum of Art and conducted a seminar on Roman villas at the Edith



Our current special exhibition, *Randal Stegmeyer: Exposing the Past*, is available to view online at exhibitions.kelsey.lsa.umich.edu/randal-stegmeyer.

New Staff



Security Officer **Jake Bennett** is a 2014 graduate of John Glenn High School. He has attended Schoolcraft Community College and is currently attending Washtenaw Community College pursuing a degree in criminal justice. He has previously worked at the Wayne County Sheriff Department as a non-sworn police officer and for the past year and a half has worked as a security officer at Beaumont Hospital in Dearborn. He is looking forward to this opportunity working for the University of Michigan and with Museum Security.



Security Officer **Nicholas Roush** has been at GSS on team B for the last two and a half years at the C & W Hospital. Before that, he was In School Suspension Supervisor at Pinckney High School for six years. He has a BS in history and was certified to teach social studies and was the D-Line varsity coach at Brighton High School for seven years. He is very happy to be in the DPSS department and enjoys its team atmosphere.



We are pleased to announce that **Irene Soto Marín** will be coming to Michigan this fall to fill a joint appointment as an assistant professor in Classical Studies and assistant curator at the Kelsey Museum. Irene received her PhD from the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University in 2018. Her research seeks to understand the nature of Graeco-Roman economies through interdisciplinary research in numismatics, archaeology, and ancient documents. We are confident that Irene will be an important addition to our faculty curators and a strong asset to both the Department of Classical Studies and the Kelsey Museum.

O'Donnell Institute of Art History at the University of Texas at Dallas. Her current projects are an “object biography” of the Villa of the Mysteries and its murals from the first century BCE to the present, and a catalogue of the Greek and Roman sculpture in Kelsey’s collections. Both projects will include contributions from curators and other scholars (some of whom are former IPCAA and History of Art graduate students), and current graduate students. After retiring, Elaine will continue to be a co-editor

of the Kelsey Museum Studies and to participate in museum activities.

In spite of our distance from the Kelsey, working remotely has allowed Conservator **Caroline Roberts** to focus on collections preservation and research projects. She applied for a federal grant which, if successful, will provide a significant boost to the museum’s technical research capacity. And although the stone condition survey is on hold, she’s been able to continue research on a stone

subset — the Terenouthis stelae. This includes a review of stone treatment methods as well as a look at how specific colors were used on a number of stelae and the few wall painting fragments that have survived from the tombs.

Graphic Artist **Lorene Sterner** is hard at work on the Kedesh seal impressions publication and waiting to spring into action if the Kelsey Marbles manuscript is put on the fast track.

The Owl in the Gift Shop Window

By Terry G. Wilfong

If you visited the Kelsey in the months before our shutdown, you may have noticed some bright blue stickers with an owl design (one of which you can still see from the sidewalk outside the gift shop; fig. 1). These stickers are part of our new branding for the Kelsey Museum gift shop, and the owl design is the work of our talented designer, Eric Campbell. Eric drew his bold owl figure from an artifact in the Kelsey Museum collection, a Greek drinking cup from around 450–400 BCE (fig. 2). Eric's owl has a long story behind it, modern and ancient.

This owl cup, of course, is already a popular artifact and staff favorite at the Kelsey, and we use it quite often in teaching and promotion. The owl was a candidate for our staff MFit t-shirt design some years ago, and we used a photograph (adorned with sprigs of holly) for our holiday hours mailing in 2017 (fig. 3). But Eric's bold new rendering gives the owl a new mission at the Kelsey.

The artifact from which the owl was taken is part of an important early



Figure 2. Red-figure kotyle (drinking cup), ca. 450–400 BCE. KM 2608.

addition to the Kelsey Museum's collections. In 1923, Francis W. Kelsey acquired for his future museum an extensive collection of pottery from the Classical world, intended to illustrate the different types and varieties of form and decoration to provide a type collection for teaching. These pots are known as the Marburg Collection, but in fact came from the collection of Paul Gottschalk, a German antiquarian book dealer who had loaned his collection to the University of Marburg, where Kelsey first saw it. (I'm getting this information from emerita curators Laurie Talalay and Margaret Root's delightful 2015 book *Passionate Curiosities: Tales of Collectors and Collections from the Kelsey Museum*, available from the Kelsey Museum website as a free PDF download.) For the then-substantial sum of \$1,200, Kelsey acquired 130 excellent specimens of Greek and Italic pottery that, in effect, illustrate the history and

development of pottery across Greek and Etruscan history. This material remains central to the Kelsey's permanent installation and an essential resource for teaching and research.

Our owl cup originally comes from Greece. It is a type of pottery known as Attic red-figured ware, made of painted and fired clay. Each side shows a figure of an owl between olive branches, above a baseline. The Kelsey cup is a two-handled drinking vessel of a type known as a kotyle. There is a similar type of cup known as a skyphos (with a narrower base) that has a variant known as a glaux (literally "owl"), often decorated with owls and having both horizontal and vertical handles. The Kelsey cup is plainer and squatter in shape and not as elaborate as the skyphos or glaux. Like the others, it would have been used for drinking wine.



Figure 1. The new owl logo, designed by Eric Campbell.

The species depicted on the cup is the “little owl” (*Athenae noctua*), which is indeed small for an owl (average length 8.7 in/22 cm, wingspan 22 in/56 cm; fig. 4). The little owl is native to much of Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, so its range takes in much of the area covered by the Kelsey Museum’s collections. The little owl is partly diurnal, and unlike many other owls is often visible during the day. Like most owls, its diet consists mainly of small mammals and birds, swallowed whole. The little owl has a distinctive call, the sound of which is said to have foreshadowed the death of Julius Caesar and could function more generally as a predictor of bad fortune.

In the Classical world, the little owl is prominently associated with wisdom and knowledge, being the symbol of the Greek goddess Athena and the Roman goddess Minerva. Probably the best-known representations of the little owl from antiquity are from its appearance on Athenian silver tetradrachms of the fifth century BCE. This coin, with its representation of Athena on the obverse and her owl on the reverse, is one of the most famous coin types of the ancient world, of which the Kelsey has a number of examples (fig. 5). The precise reason

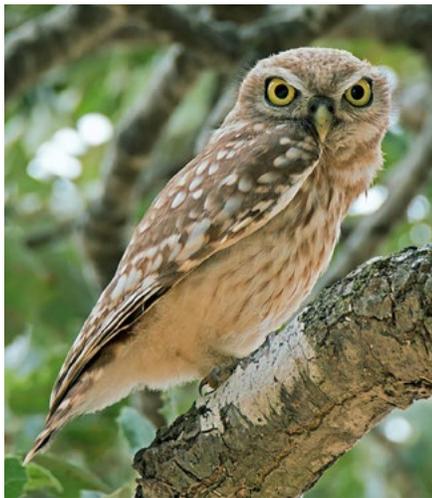


Figure 4. Little owl. Photo by Artemy Voikhansky / Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 3. The owl flanked by holly sprigs on the 2017 holiday mailer. Art by Lorene Sterner.

for the association of the little owl with drinking cups is uncertain, but may reflect ideas of drinking wine bringing forth wisdom or truth, for good or ill.

I was particularly pleased to see that Eric’s design preserved a distinctive detail of the original: one of the owl’s eyes is slightly larger than the other. Now, this might seem to be an ancient mistake that we could have easily fixed, but in fact this shows how observant and careful our ancient painter was. Little owls do have slightly differently sized eyes, as indeed do most owls and many other birds as well. All owls have remarkably sensitive and accurate

eyesight, particularly adapted for hunting prey at night, and their vision works with their extraordinary sense of hearing to make them especially accurate hunters. They are truly amazing birds.

As you may have gathered, owls have a particular fascination for me. In recent years I’ve been able to feed my interest by watching owls on live nature cams online. It’s a fascinating, sometimes harrowing, way to observe these amazing birds in nature. If you are at all interested in the life of the little owl, I recommend a little owl nestcam in the Netherlands (where this bird is known as a “Steenuil”) that you can find at vogelbescherming.nl. The website is in Dutch, so be aware that the “Buitencam” is directed outside the nest, where the owls sometimes sleep, and “Binnencam” 1 and 2 show different views of the inside of the nest. Quite often you’ll just see the birds sleeping, which I find particularly relaxing to watch; although the owlets from this season are growing up and may have fledged by the time you read this, there should be more next year.

As for the Kelsey’s little owl, watch out! I have a feeling you will be seeing this bird more often in the future. ▲



Figure 5. Athenian silver tetradrachm, 5th century BCE. Diameter 2.4 cm. Dr. George Monks bequest. KM 1991.2.67.

Terry G. Wilfong is the director of the Kelsey Museum and its curator of Graeco-Roman Egyptian Collections.

Drilling through Tiber Island

By Laura Motta

In the heat of a Roman summer, a handful of students from University of Michigan and University of St Andrews (UK), led by Andrea Brock (IPCAA 2017) and myself, recorded hundreds of meters of sediments and deposits buried below the present-day surface in the heart of the city. Together, we observed the texture, granulometry, coherence, and mineralization evidence; we documented the presence of pottery and other anthropic material, took pictures and drew sketches, sampled the soil and meticulously sieved it to retrieve animal and plant remains. The clay, silt, pebbles, and scattered anthropic material represented thousands of years' worth of landscape transformation and human activity that are now covered by streets busy with traffic. By drilling boreholes we were able to overcome the challenge of excavating in a modern city; it gave us access to ancient deposits and alluvial sequences of the Tiber valley up to 55 meters (about 180

feet) below the modern surface — a depth that is typically inaccessible to archaeologists through conventional excavation methodologies.

The position of the coring survey was critical. The chosen area, known as the Forum Boarium, was the location of Rome's first river harbor and archaic commercial district. It is adjacent to the early sixth-century BCE temple of Sant'Omobono, the oldest temple of the nascent city. Just behind it, enclosed between the Capitoline Hill and the Palatine, lies the Forum Romanum. This area overlooks the Tiber valley and the Tiber island, two prominent features in the landscape of ancient Rome and important elements for understanding its urban development. But the river as we see it today — its banks, the hills, the little valleys of the tributaries — are drastically different from “the old days” and they have been the object of massive modification by natural and human forces.

Despite Rome's long tradition of study, scholars actually know frustratingly little about the city's original setting and early history. In attempt to fill some of these gaps in historical knowledge, the Forum Boarium Coring Survey started in 2015 as a cross-disciplinary international project in collaboration with the Italian National Institute for Geophysics and Vulcanology, the ¹⁴CHRONO Centre (Queen's University, Belfast), and the Department of Environmental Biology (University of Rome La Sapienza). A combination of environmental sampling, paleomagnetic analysis, palynology, and radiocarbon dates on twenty-two



Drilling cores outside the Theater of Marcellus, Rome.



Andrea Brock and Laura Motta (at right) discuss cores with the team.

cores is allowing us to reconstruct the Holocene sedimentary history of Rome's river valley, as well as the pre-urban landscape, its transformation, and human-environment interactions. This reconstruction has both scientific and historical implications for our understanding of the origins of the Eternal City and the impact of its urban system on the local and regional landscape.

The first two field seasons revealed crucial data on the shifting position of the Tiber River since 6000 BCE and a series of exciting discoveries. We identified Bronze Age levels dated through the second millennium BCE that offer extremely important information on the growth of the prehistoric settlement. We also located a raised floodplain terrace at the base of the Capitoline Hill. Situated 5 meters above the river level in the early sixth century, when the Romans build there their first temple, this unique elevated feature of the landscape provided space directly on the bank of the Tiber that was nonetheless largely protected from the threat of floodwaters. However, soon after, an unusually sudden and massive silting in the river valley attest to a significant hydrological shift in the Tiber basin, and a radical change in the riverine environment that jeopardized the archaic structures along the banks. The first physical evidence for dredging in the presumed location of the river harbor appears as early as the fifth century BCE. This represents one of the earliest examples environmental mitigation activities pursued in Rome, as inhabitants grappled with building a city within a high-energy river valley. The Romans, indeed, had to continually dredge the harbor to keep it in use, contrasting human and climatic impacts on sedimentation. By the third century, however, the task proved too great, and they built a second harbor elsewhere.

These results add new data on human-environment interactions and show how the early inhabitants of Rome were compelled to adapt to their volatile river in order to establish permanent urban systems, including ritual and commercial activities. Most importantly, several geological and sedimentological details suggest that a fault line, acting as a sediment trap, amplified the accumulation of alluvial deposits and triggered the formation of the Tiber island.

Last summer we focused on testing the hypothesis that the Tiber island originated along this previously unknown fault line. We planned additional boreholes to collect new chronological markers that will clarify the timeline for environmental transformations and the resultant mitigation required to maintain operations in the river valley. More sampling and more sieving produced more exciting data. Just before the COVID-19 lockdown, specimens were sent to the ¹⁴CHRONO Centre lab for radiocarbon dating and we are now waiting for the results, as soon as the operations in the lab can resume.

If the island is confirmed to be a development of the mid-first millennium, as indicated in the preliminary



U-M alumna Sabrina Ross sifting sediments.

results, this discovery will change centuries of thinking about Rome and provide new perspectives on the reasons for urban investment at this strategic location on the Tiber. The Tiber island facilitated the crossing of the river along an important north-south commercial route. This new reconstruction provides a starkly different context for the crucial period during which Rome was transformed from a hut settlement to a monumental city.

By shedding light on resilience and environmental management, the story of early Rome will be better understood and supported with empirical evidence. Thus, the results of this project will help explain why Rome is where it is and why it developed in the way that it did. The new data on the Holocene evolution of the landscape show a very dynamic environment, with rapid and at times dramatic changes requiring human response and adaptation. In more general terms, this kind of long-term interaction between the city of Rome, its urban development and the Tiber River helps inform scientists about the perception and management of risk, adaptation strategies, and community environmental resilience. ▲

Laura Motta is a Kelsey Museum researcher specializing in human-environment interactions in complex societies. Her current field project focuses on the emergence of the first cities in Central Italy.

SPECIAL EXHIBITION

Randal Stegmeyer: Exposing the Past

Online starting May 1, 2020. We look forward to welcoming you to visit the exhibition in person when it is possible to reopen our galleries to the public.

As a complement to our special exhibitions, the Kelsey's online exhibitions offer additional resources and extend opportunities to explore our collections.

lsa.umich.edu/kelsey/exhibitions/online-exhibitions.html

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