

# The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology Newsletter

Fall 2024



Celebrating 100 Years of Archaeological Research

# On the Cover

Enoch E. Peterson—field director of the University of Michigan’s 1924 archaeological project at Antioch of Pisidia, Turkey—stands atop one arch of the massive stone aqueduct at the site, as a local man waves from a lower level. This striking archival photo (Kelsey Museum neg. no. 7.1358) was captured

by university photographer George R. Swain on July 12, 1924.

This issue’s cover story, “Looking Back, Looking Forward: 100 Years of Archaeological Research,” commemorates a century of Kelsey Museum–sponsored field projects. Since our first digs in Turkey and

Egypt, the Kelsey’s efforts have yielded extraordinary insights into the ancient Mediterranean, North Africa, and Middle East. Read more about these early archaeological projects—and their ongoing legacy—on **pp. 14–15**.



## Join Us for Saturnalia!

Ring in the holiday season at the Kelsey Museum’s Saturnalia Celebration and Open House on **Thursday, December 5, 2024, from 4 to 6 PM**. Enjoy music, games, and food here at the Kelsey—all while immersing yourself in the merrymaking spirit of the ancient Roman holiday. Keep an eye out for invitations in November. Io Saturnalia!

Kelsey staff and visitors at last year’s Saturnalia Celebration, December 13, 2023.

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# The Kelsey Museum of Archaeology Newsletter

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## INFORMATION

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 @kelsey\_museum

## GALLERY HOURS

The Kelsey Museum galleries are open to all visitors Tuesday–Friday 9 a.m.–4 p.m. and Saturday–Sunday 11 a.m.–4 p.m. We offer both in-person tours and a variety of virtual programs.

## UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN REGENTS

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# From the Director



Dear Friends,

As we usher in the fall season—and I begin my fifth academic year as director of the Kelsey—I am filled with a sense of renewed energy and excitement for what lies ahead here at the museum. Our institution often seems to be in a state of constant transformation, and this year is no exception. In fact, the changes we are experiencing now promise to chart an exciting new course for the museum that carries us into the next decade and beyond.

In the pages that follow, you will read about our strategic planning efforts (see p. 2), aimed at envisioning the Kelsey Museum’s future for the next ten years and laying a path to arrive there. We are also thrilled to welcome new staff members whose fresh perspectives and innovative ideas are already making significant strides in rejuvenating the institution (see pp. 24–25, p. 28–29).

Our physical spaces are undergoing significant upgrades as well (see p. 9). Recent renovations in the Newberry Building have revitalized this section of the museum, and we’re exploring the possibility of reopening the State Street entrance to improve accessibility and visitor flow. In addition, we are hoping to relaunch our gift shop in partnership with Barnes & Noble, creating a space that complements the unique experiences visitors have within our galleries.

Another highlight is the arrival of Katherine Burge, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of the History of Art who is serving as a guest curator for the Crossroads of Culture project this year (see pp. 12–13). With her leadership and expertise, we are moving full steam ahead with the development of this gallery in collaboration with the design firm Solid Light. This space promises to be more interactive and engaging than any we’ve had before, offering dynamic displays and story-focused exhibits that speak to visitors of varied ages and backgrounds.

Over the summer, I once again spent a productive—though exceptionally warm—field season in Rome, directing the Gabii Project, an activity I have led since 2007. This year marked the end of one chapter at the site, as I am passing the directorship on to Marcello Mogetta, an IPAMAA alum, an associate professor at the University of Missouri, and a long-standing member of the team who has been with the Gabii Project since its beginning. Although I am stepping back from my role as director, I will remain actively involved at Gabii, focusing on excavation methodology and digital archaeology as a proud member of a group of dedicated faculty—many of them Michigan alumni—who continue to collaborate on this work.

As I reflect on the many developments ongoing at the Kelsey and abroad, my thoughts also turn to the individuals who have influenced the museum over the years. It is with sadness that I note the passing of Jim Duderstadt, former president of the University of Michigan (1988–1996) and a longtime supporter of the Kelsey Museum. In addition to being a member for many years, Jim and his wife, Anne, played important roles in the development and funding of the 1990 exhibition *The President’s Choice: Selections from the Ruthven Collection of Antiquities*.

As we look ahead, I want to thank you for your ongoing support and enthusiasm for the Kelsey Museum and its many activities. We invite you to visit our galleries, engage with our new exhibits, and continue being a part of the vibrant community that makes our museum such a special place.

# Planning for the Future of the Kelsey Museum

Archaeologists frequently hear people say, “What is new about the past?”

We love this question because it gives us the opportunity to tell them about new technologies for studying the past, new discoveries that change what we thought we knew about the past, and new research on museum collections that can illuminate previously unknown evidence relating to the past.

The Kelsey Museum is no different. We are excited about the future of the museum—the archaeological research we do and the public programs that bring it to life for audiences at the University of Michigan and around the state. To plan intentionally for that future, we have launched a strategic planning process to provide a road map from 2025 through 2029–2030.

Our first priority was to find the right person to help facilitate the plan. We are fortunate to have found Gail Anderson, an experienced leader in facilitating institutional planning and transformation, building institutional and leadership capacity, and expanding community and global

relevance for museums. With more than 65 museum strategic plans under her belt, Gail has hit the ground running. In the spring of 2024, she spoke with museum staff, as well campus and community stakeholders, to conduct a SWOT analysis of the Kelsey—evaluating its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. She has also looked at benchmark data between the Kelsey Museum and its peers to better inform her work. And in August, the entire staff convened for a strategic planning retreat.

The plan is still coming together, but the mood at the retreat was very positive. The Kelsey Museum is a beloved institution, and everyone involved is hopeful about its future. The strategic plan is helping us dream even bigger than we imagined and set institutional priorities for achieving our goals.

In early 2025, the strategic plan should be complete. We look forward to sharing it with you!

—Jennifer Kirker, Associate Director



Kelsey Museum staff discuss workplace culture at the strategic planning retreat led by Gail Anderson in August 2024.



Clockwise from top left: Team members from the AMC Project at the Weni show opening reception. The Sohag National Museum facade on exhibit opening day. Janet Richards, Dr. Moamen Osman, Dr. Ahmed Hemayda, Mr. Alaa El Qadi (Sohag National Museum Director), and Mrs. Nahla Abdullah El Keshky (Sohag Exhibitions Director) in the Weni gallery in Sohag. Dr. Mohamed Ismail Khaled (center) in the gallery's "courtyard" area.

## Weni the Elder Exhibition Opens in Sohag, Egypt

The University of Michigan's Abydos Middle Cemetery (AMC) Project and the Kelsey Museum's staff—working in close collaboration with Egypt's Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the staff of the Sohag National Museum—designed, conserved, and curated the new exhibition *The Governor of Upper Egypt Weni the Elder and the Origins of the Osiris Festival* in the Pilgrimage section of the Sohag National Museum in Egypt. This exhibition, funded by a grant from the American Research Center in Egypt Antiquities Endowment Fund, reunites objects from 1860 excavations in the Abydos Middle Cemetery with objects found by the Michigan team since 1999 and presents them in a display that reconstructs a sense of their original context.

On October 28, 2024, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities Dr. Mohamed Ismail Khaled formally opened the exhibition. Also in attendance at the opening in Sohag were the Head of the Museums Sector Dr. Moamen Osman, Head of the Central Department of Regional Museums Dr. Ahmed Hemayda, Head of the Central Department of Upper Egypt Dr. Mohamed Abdel Badia, and General Director of Sohag Antiquities Dr. Mohamed Naguib Reda. The event was featured in the prime-time roundup on Egypt's national news channel the next day. This exhibition's opening represents the culmination of the hard work of an extensive multinational and multidisciplinary team.



### Photo Show at the Kelsey Museum

AMC Project Director Janet Richards and Associate Director Suzanne Davis, with Kelsey staff and U-M graduate students Heidi Hilliker and Sam Ross, installed a sister show in the Kelsey Museum. *A Michigan-Egyptian Collaboration: Exhibiting Weni the Elder in the Sohag National Museum* gives 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. An in-gallery monitor offers behind-the-scenes glimpses of this Michigan-Egyptian collaboration.



## Join the Adventure: Camp Kelsey Returns with New Sessions for 2025

Following the success of the inaugural Camp Kelsey in June 2024, the Kelsey Museum's Education Department is eager to present more exciting camp opportunities for middle schoolers next summer. Camp Kelsey will run July 7–11 and July 21–25, 2025. One session will focus on archaeology, while the other will explore the *Percy Jackson* universe and myth-making. Each camp will immerse students in lively learning experiences that include behind-the-scenes tours, field trips, thought-provoking conversations with U-M faculty, and

hands-on creative projects. Registration for Camp Kelsey opens in late January/early February; members receive priority registration and discount pricing.

Keep an eye on the Kelsey Museum website ([myumi.ch/G411q](https://myumi.ch/G411q)) for more details on how to secure your spot for a summer of adventure and discovery!

Above: Campers climb on the *Daedalus* sculpture outside the University of Michigan Museum of Art, June 2024.

## Teacher Advisory Group: Updates and Initiatives

This fall, the Education Department hosted its first meeting of the Teacher Advisory Group, consisting of K–12 educators who help the Kelsey evaluate existing programs and make recommendations for new educational materials. Initial initiatives include reviewing current offerings, integrating the Egyptian Teacher Resource Guide into curricula, and providing feedback on the forthcoming Nubian and Roman guides. Stay tuned for updates on the group's progress and contributions!



# The Kelsey Book Club: Discussing Classic Myths with Modern Twists

From the complex interplay of the Olympian pantheon to oft-maligned figures such as Medusa and Circe, the Kelsey Museum's new book club invites you to explore ancient myths through modern retellings.

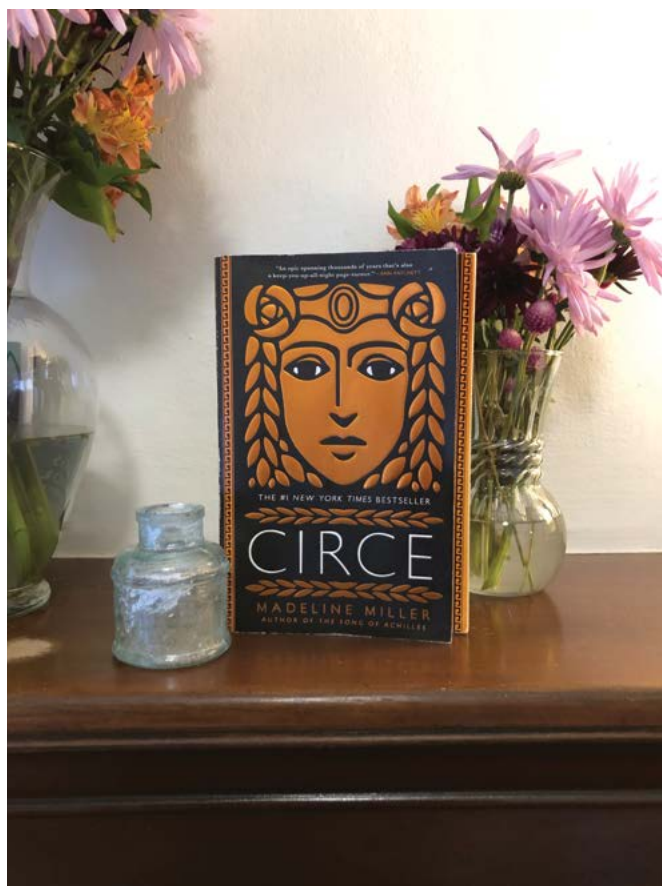
The Kelsey Book Club aims to create a vibrant community around shared literary enthusiasm. An initiative of the Education Department, this monthly gathering is open to anyone interested in fiction, mythology, and the ancient world. Meetings take place on Thursdays from 6:00 to 7:00 PM during the academic year, led by expert moderators.

Our first session on September 26 welcomed a lively group of 13 participants discussing *Circe* by Madeline Miller. Skillfully facilitated by Brittany Hardy, a PhD student in the Department of Classical Studies, the session received excellent feedback.

"We would love to give Brittany a shout-out and thank her for being our first moderator," said Shannon Ness, the Kelsey's university programs coordinator. "It could not have gone any better!"

While this year's books focus on women in Greek tales, future selections will explore different genres, themes, cultures, and mythological systems.

The book club offers tiered pricing to accommodate participants, such as students and members, with proceeds supporting future Kelsey community programming. For more information and to view this year's lineup, visit our website at [myumi.ch/Drn1Q](https://myumi.ch/Drn1Q).



## Expanded Community Tour Programming

The Kelsey Museum is pleased to offer expanded community tour programming this year, designed to explore our collections through a different lens and with new stories. This inclusive programming, which incorporates LGBTQ+ themes and DEI topics such as multiculturalism in the ancient world, will be interspersed during our regular weekend drop-in schedule—completely free and open to the public. The education team is working on self-guided tour options related to these topics as well.

Over the summer, Kelsey docents also began conducting tours in French and Chinese, with plans to add more multilingual opportunities in the future. Visit the Kelsey Museum's website for a full roster of upcoming events: [myumi.ch/jZRPP](https://myumi.ch/jZRPP).

# From Archives to Artifacts: Dave Horrocks' Journey as a Kelsey Museum Docent

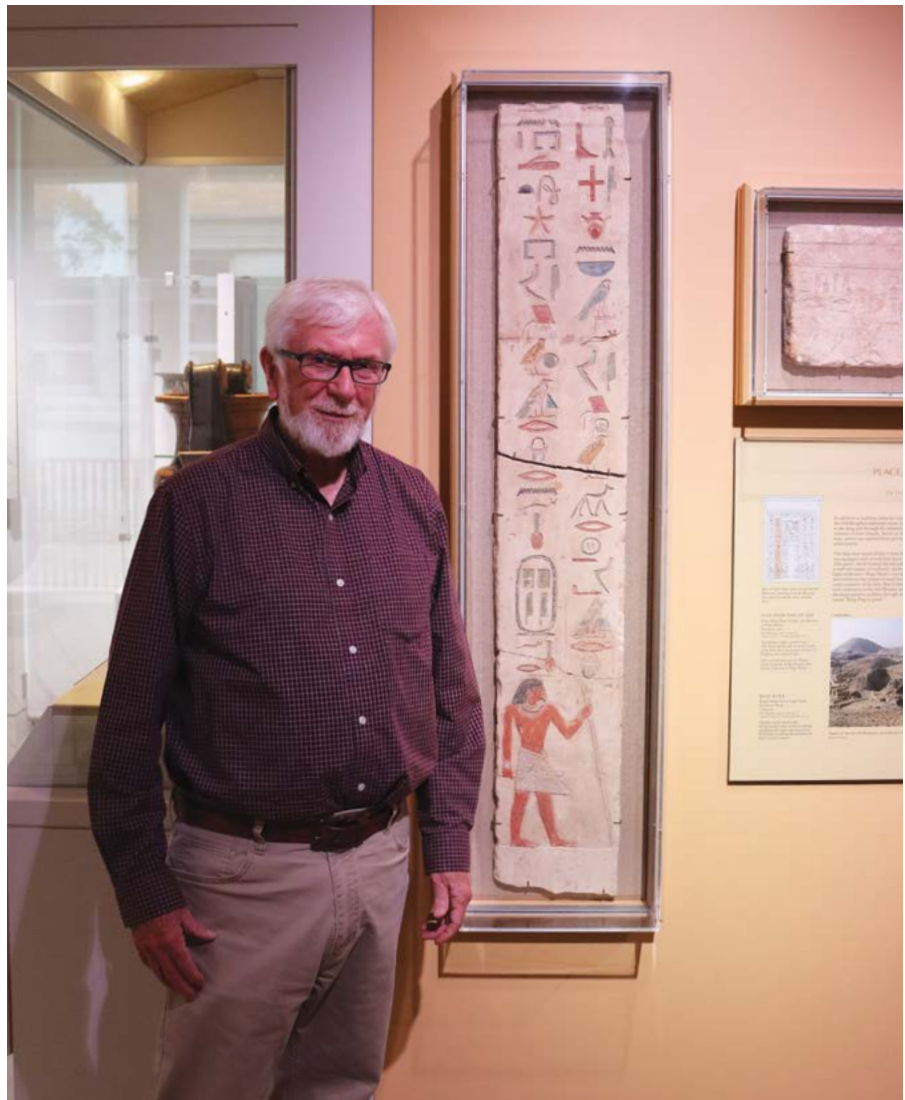
Throughout the year, the Kelsey Museum mounts dozens of in-person public tours and serves thousands of K-12 and university students on class visits. These activities would be impossible were it not for the hard work and time of our docents, who—taken together—devote hundreds of hours each year participating in continuing education courses and thoughtfully designing and carrying out programs intended to spark curiosity, learning, and engagement with the ancient world for visiting audiences.

To get a glimpse behind the docent curtain, we recently sat down with Dave Horrocks, who has volunteered at the Kelsey Museum for approximately 10 years.

Dave spent his career as supervisory archivist with the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library on North Campus—one of several presidential libraries administered by the US National Archives and Records Administration. There, he oversaw the library's historical holdings. "But I've always been interested in ancient history," Dave said. Like many other people who come to love such topics as archaeology and ancient cultures in their youth, he frequented museums with his family and "had a great, illustrated book." As he explained, "It was early love."

After moving to Ann Arbor in the 1970s, Dave and his family visited the Kelsey periodically over the following decades: "I was one of the townies who stood out on Maynard Street when Elaine Gazda had the dedication [of the Upjohn Wing]."

His involvement began in earnest following his retirement. Kicking around what to do, Dave vowed that he would brush up on his high school Latin and read the Roman inscriptions on display at the Kelsey. "That lasted about 30 seconds," he admitted. Luckily, he didn't give up after his



Dave stands with the false door panel of Qar, which he uses as a tool when introducing visitors to hieroglyphs and illustrating how they work.

ill-fated attempt—when a docent-training class opened, he signed up.

Although Dave leads tours on a variety of topics at the Kelsey Museum, one of his frequently repeated topics is ancient writing—understandable given his background at the National Archives. "I'm fascinated with written communication," he said, especially the question of how systems of writing

came to an end. Best of all, "It's something that people can relate to...you don't have to do a lot of background. On mythology or any number of other topics, there's a lot you may need to fill in. But people understand what writing's all about."

Among the numerous artifacts Dave presents on his tours, a few always seem to capture his



imagination and that of his tour groups, making frequent appearances: the demon-catching bowl, with its lines of Mandaic script; the Herakles-Amazon vase, which reveals much about Mediterranean commerce; and the coffin of Djehutymose, to name a few. “The Qar panel is terrific,” he added. “I think that’s my other big favorite, because you can do a quick, couple-points lesson on how hieroglyphs work.”

Preparing for tours involves a mix of creativity and rigorous research for Dave. Whether he’s crafting a new tour or refreshing an old favorite, he places a heavy emphasis on not only storytelling but also on what can be observed: “I’ve had to constantly tell myself, ‘Talk about the object—talk about what they can look at, not about all the wonderful things that I’m thinking of that happened around the object or the people who made the object.’”

This is especially useful when teaching visitors about papyrus. “One of the things I discovered is that you can run a sheet of papyrus through your home ink-jet printer and print out an image from the papyrus collection [housed at the Hatcher Library],” he described. Dave frequently passes

these examples around to his tour groups, using them as an inroad to talk about the “amazing level of communication that existed at this time.”

A perpetual student, Dave shared that he likes the ongoing learning of the Kelsey’s docent program and the creative challenge—including, at times, the “fairly complex choreography”—required to put together new tours. Reflecting his strong belief in focusing on the observable, one such under-construction tour involves “simply looking more closely at objects,” considering what Kelsey artifacts would have looked like at the time of their making. Another topic is Christians and pagans: “I’m interested in transitions and changes,” Dave explained. The idea was “triggered by reading an article about a Christian who worked with his family making mummies....There’s a whole story about this interim period.”

When asked what he enjoys about being a part of the Kelsey community, Dave recounted a week of diverse activities epitomizing the joy of volunteering at the museum: “On Sunday [fall Family Day], we helped kids discover there is fun in ancient history. On Monday, Professor Janet

Richards gave us a fascinating introduction to her Weni excavation and the exhibits here and in Egypt. On Wednesday, I helped with a tour for a large undergraduate class on food and drink in the Middle East—and tour prep work always teaches me new things. On Thursday, I attended a talk on new research on diet and nutrition in Karanis. This is all a privilege, and I say hooray to the Kelsey education staff and my fellow docents who make volunteering so rewarding.”

Indeed, Dave emphasized his appreciation of the docent corps on more than one occasion. “We ourselves are a community,” he noted. “The docent corps is a really good group. They bring a wide variety of backgrounds to it, and it’s fun and refreshing to share an interest in the topic with them.”

Dave Horrocks exemplifies the spirit of curiosity and dedication at the Kelsey Museum. His tours engage museum visitors—bridging the gap between past and present. Through the collective efforts of Dave and his fellow docents, the stories of the past remain exciting, engaging, and deeply personal, ensuring that ancient history continues to resonate with contemporary audiences.



## Interested in an Interview?

Are you a docent interested in sharing your passion for the ancient world and your journey to the Kelsey Museum? Contact [emilyall@umich.edu](mailto:emilyall@umich.edu) for more information!

Dave makes note of the incantation bowls he often incorporates into his tours.



## Capturing History: Swain's Mediterranean Travels Highlighted in Mini-Exhibition and Book

We proudly announce the opening of “Back Roads and Bedbugs: Swain’s Mediterranean Adventures, 1924–1926,” the latest installment in the “Kelsey in Focus” series. The mini-exhibition on Swain opened in October and will run through the spring of 2025.

From 1924 to 1926, University of Michigan researchers led groundbreaking archaeological expeditions across the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and North Africa. The unsung heroes of these campaigns at Antioch and Carthage were two “dig” cars: a Dodge sedan and a Graham Brothers truck, which transported equipment, personnel, and supplies across challenging, often uncharted terrains. U-M photographer George R. Swain played an even more crucial role in these expeditions. In addition to capturing the remains of ancient sites, Swain drove and maintained the two Detroit-made vehicles. And, although not part of his official university duties, he often turned his camera to the world around him—capturing scenes of snake charmers, bustling markets, isolated monasteries, and refugees navigating a post-World War I landscape. Swain’s images, accompanied by his writings, offer an invaluable, personal narrative of a world in flux.

Lauren E. Talalay, curator emerita at the Kelsey Museum, was the driving force behind the exhibition’s development. The Kelsey in Focus

display complements her book, *From the Motor City to the Mediterranean: Travels of a Truck, a Sedan, and an Inquisitive Photographer, 1924–1926*, the latest release in the Kelsey Museum Publications Series.

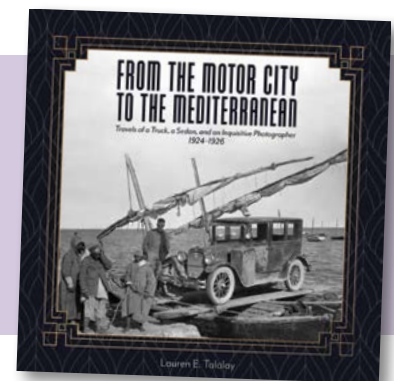
“I never suspected that the unassuming photographs of two 1920s vehicles, which kept intruding into my archival research at the Kelsey Museum, would lead me to a treasure trove of letters, newspaper articles, and photographs, all providing insight into one man’s resonant experience throughout the Mediterranean at a pivotal time in history,” described Lauren. “Although Swain’s commentaries and photographs are a small, personal, and fragmented record, they loom large, allowing us to capture moments from the past that might have been forever lost.”

Visitors to the exhibition can view objects and mementos from Swain’s travels, including a large-format camera, glass plates, and a notebook of letters to his family. A slideshow of Swain’s evocative photographs further provides a window into the Mediterranean’s social and political atmosphere during the early 20th century. Finally, visitors can peruse a copy of *From the Motor City to the Mediterranean*, which is available on display.

Taken together, the exhibit and book offer a broad view of life around the turn of the last century in America and various Mediterranean regions. They highlight Swain’s multifaceted role as a photographer and outside observer, providing insights into the ways of life he sought to document, to preserve, and paradoxically, to modernize.

### Read the Book

The full text of *From the Motor City to the Mediterranean* is available to read online at [myumi.ch/syEdV](https://myumi.ch/syEdV). Copies of the book can also be purchased from our distributor, ISD, at [myumi.ch/Pk56D](https://myumi.ch/Pk56D).



Top: The Golden Horn, Constantinople, Turkey, as captured by George R. Swain on June 17, 1924, during his trip to the Middle East (KM neg. no. 7.0610).

# Inclusive Improvements: Recent Facilities Upgrades at the Kelsey

I'm excited to share with you the latest progress on the many facilities projects we have been working on this year at the Kelsey Museum. These updates reflect our ongoing commitment to preserving the museum's historic integrity while enhancing the experience for both visitors and staff.

One of our most significant accomplishments was resurfacing the original hardwood floors on the Newberry side of the building. The restoration, which included the hallways, director's office, and conference rooms, has revitalized these spaces while maintaining their historic character.

Another large-scale project was the renovation of the Kelsey Library. After new carpeting was installed over the summer and the old furniture removed, we have recently received new tables, chairs, shelves, and other effects. Now furnished, this space offers a refreshed and inviting environment for students, faculty, and guests to enjoy.

We also successfully upgraded the security desk at the State Street entrance. While some minor adjustments will be made in the coming weeks, the new ADA-compliant

desk is fully operational—enhancing storage, administrative capacity, and accessibility. In terms of further space optimization, the offices of the Education Department and associate director have been swapped and reorganized. These moves have proven to be better situational placements, enhancing workflow and accessibility for these key staff.

Looking ahead, we have planned additional projects, including acoustic modifications for the conference rooms, which we expect to complete within the fiscal year. We are also conducting assessments of the electrical and HVAC systems in Newberry Hall to ensure they continue to meet our operational needs. These improvements continue to build on other recent projects, such as the dedication of a new accessible parking spot near the Upjohn entrance on Maynard—allowing us to make the museum a more welcoming and functional space for all.

—Tamika Mohr, Chief Administrator



Above: Security Officer Nicholas Roush at the recently installed security desk in the Newberry Building.



Above right: Accessible doors leading to the Kelsey's classrooms were installed this fall.



Right: Associate Director Jennifer Kirker in her new office space.

## Buried History: Excavating a Republican-Era Tomb at Vigna Murata

It's Mid-June in the southern periphery of Rome: For the last several months, a group of contract archaeologists have been carrying out rescue excavations of an imperial necropolis as part of the planning process to develop a vacant piece of land. The developer, Esselunga—a major grocery store chain in Italy—is building a new megastore at Vigna Murata. Hundreds of simple graves have been recorded and meticulously excavated. This has all gone according to plan.

What was not planned, however, was the discovery of a much older chamber tomb, excavated in the bedrock of the sloping side of the hill. A short dromos (corridor) led to a vertical slab sealing its entrance.

Republican-period chamber tombs, while rare, are known in the hinterland of Rome. But the Vigna Murata tomb is exceptional. Dated to the late 4th–early 3rd centuries BCE, it is a perfect example of an intact family burial—one not plundered in antiquity or looted in modern times. Placed on the funerary beds and scattered on the floor were the remains of four individuals, dozens and dozens of grave goods, and funerary offerings. The Soprintendenza Speciale di Roma (Italian State Archaeological Service) immediately realized that the discovery offers a unique opportunity to tell the story of two generations of a well-off suburban family.

A team—consisting of me (as PI), Nic Terrenato (as co-PI), and IPAMAA alumna Sheira Cohen (now at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)—has been invited by the Soprintendenza to study the tomb and to coordinate the research on the materials. We signed an MOU and received funding from Esselunga to conduct sophisticated scientific analyses and assemble innovative 3-D reconstructions.

The tomb was excavated in July and August; I completed the sampling, sieving, and sorting of the sediment at the very end of August, just in time to head back to Ann Arbor for the beginning of the fall semester. The materials are now in a Soprintendenza facility, waiting to be sampled during the next few months for biochemical, isotopic, and proteomic analysis. Next steps will include processing the photogrammetry models to review the precise position of the remains in the chamber. We look forward to sharing more about this exciting project as it progresses!

—*Laura Motta, KMA Bioarchaeology Lab*



After sampling for phytoliths and chemical analysis, the totality of the sediment was floated and wet-sieved with 1 mm mesh to recover the smallest grave goods and bone fragments (top). Laura covering vessels and human remains on the central bed (above).



Excavation of the lateral bed.



View of the hillslope and the chamber tomb excavation area.



Laura found this *aes rude* (bronze mass; above left) and *aes grave* (first Roman cast coin; above right) during wet sieving. These objects represent the transition in the currency system used in Rome at the end of the 4th century BCE, confirming the use of the tomb by two different generations.

## New Center Focused on Community Engagement in Archaeology and Heritage to Debut in 2025

We're excited to announce that the Kelsey Museum is looking to launch an innovative new Center for Community Archaeology and Heritage, which I will direct, beginning in the winter 2025 semester.

The idea for the center developed partly out of work that many Kelsey archaeological projects have been doing in the field—working collaboratively with local communities and colleagues to identify research questions and heritage-management strategies; to develop public presentations, including exhibitions; and to structure research so that it has local benefits. We choose to work in these ways because it improves the quality of archaeological research by incorporating local knowledge (for example, about the local environment). It also is a way of repairing the long colonial past of archaeology as a field.

The Center for Community Archaeology and Heritage will aim initially to provide support for community engagement in University of Michigan–based archaeological

projects, including those at the Kelsey and in other units on campus, such as the Museum of Anthropological Archaeology. While specific plans are still being discussed, some initial ideas include supporting graduate students doing community engagement through fieldwork funding and offering residencies here in Ann Arbor for colleagues and community members working with U-M projects. We will also aim to host conferences in which we collectively discuss how our community engagement efforts have gone well (and perhaps also not so well—a regular risk of doing this kind of work). Look for an announcement of a conference during the winter semester.

The center will initially be an administrative concept rather than a physical space, and we do not yet know how it will grow, but we look forward to taking our first step in the coming year.

—Geoff Emberling, Associate Research Scientist

# Crossroads of Culture: The Kelsey Museum's Path to a Dynamic New Gallery

“What in the world is a *folles*?”

Following the installation of the Kelsey Museum's current Crossroads of Culture Object Spotlight display earlier this year, Associate Director Jennifer Kirker and Curator Janet Richards were discussing a case of more than a dozen coins from the Byzantine Empire. These coins were installed alongside other objects from the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East that were chosen by Kelsey staff for display—intricately cut and blown glass, finely wrought ceramics, and wooden relief panels carved with Coptic imagery and Arabic blessings. Large-scale reproductions of textiles and pages from Napoleon's *Description de l'Égypte* rounded out the space.

Among the spotlight display, the coin case stood as an outlier. While the vibrant colors and striking forms of other artifacts—along with their accompanying didactic panels—drew in visitors, the collection of tiny, unassuming coins was easy to glance over. Added to that was the fact of the

coins' sparse labels, which listed their denomination, the city in which they were minted, and the ruler or rulers imprinted onto their surfaces. Useful and informative, perhaps, to a numismatist with a particular interest in Byzantine coinage—but probably not as much to the average visitor.

Jennifer's seemingly innocuous question about *folles*—large, bronze coins introduced by the eastern Roman emperor Anastasius I—exemplified the ample opportunity for collaboration that the development of the Crossroads of Culture gallery has provided at the Kelsey. That initial query led to a deeper consideration: how can we make these 16 tiny coins meaningful to visitors?

That's where Allen Kendall, a doctoral student in the Interdepartmental Program in Ancient History, came in. Janet was aware of some of Allen's research interests and wondered if he might be willing to shed light on the coins' history and context, given the fact that the Kelsey is currently without

a numismatist to assist with such detailed levels of interpretation.

Allen generously agreed, meticulously researching the Kelsey coins and crafting new descriptions that described their imagery, their denominations, and the political and economic context of the empire in which they were minted. His work transformed many layers of scholarly information into engaging prose for the general public—turning the coins into touchpoints for storytelling that connect past and present.

The collaborative efforts of several museum staff members were crucial in further bringing the case to life. Exhibitions Coordinator Scott Meier crafted a display that securely holds each coin, allowing visitors to see both the front and back. Eric Campbell, the museum's graphic designer, organized Allen's research and coin photography into labels that inform without overwhelming the case. Additional input came from Michelle Fontenot (collections manager) and Suzanne Davis (conservator), who prepared the coins



Exhibitions Coordinator Scott Meier and Conservator Carrie Roberts install a painted wood panel for the Crossroads of Culture Object Spotlight #3.



The updated coin case includes a mounting system that allows the objects to be viewed from all angles, detailed new panels, and a booklet visitors can peruse to get more information on the coins.

for the exhibit, as well as Emily Allison-Siep (editor), who helped finalize the interpretive text.

Of course, the efforts involved with the coin case align with the museum's broader goals in the development of the permanent Crossroads of Culture gallery—namely, crafting meaningful visitor experiences, using stories to connect with modern audiences, and seeking collaborations with other U-M units to do so. To help with this, we have partnered with Solid Light, a Kentucky-based exhibit firm known for creating award-winning experiences for cultural destinations. Key Kelsey staff participated in a one-day interpretive planning retreat with Solid Light over the summer, setting the stage for our multiyear collaboration.

Throughout this academic year, the Crossroads curatorial team—consisting

of Janet Richards, Laura Motta, Katherine Burge, Will Pestle, Jennifer Kirker, and graduate students Sam Ross and Heidi Hilliker—is grouping objects and crafting overarching narratives. They continue to consult with experts from other departments to consider potential loans from the U-M Museum of Anthropological Archaeology, Papyrology Collection, Hatcher Library, and the Museum of Art. Heidi and Sam are also spearheading the development of Object Spotlight #4, which will feature artifacts exploring the interactions between humans and nature, chosen by members of the Kelsey graduate student community.

Meanwhile, visitor feedback remains integral to our exhibit development. The Kelsey Museum is actively collecting thoughts and suggestions through our visitor feedback station,

and we thank everyone who has lent their voice so far. According to Scott Meier, some trends have emerged from the initial round of questions: “The takeaway at this point is people want more hands-on interactive displays that they can explore the information with.” Visitors have also expressed a desire to learn more about life, death, and the afterlife, as well as the role that animals and non-human entities played in the lives and cultures of the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East.

As we march toward the opening of the Crossroads gallery in spring 2026, the Kelsey Museum remains committed to incorporating and addressing visitor feedback and creating a space that celebrates the interconnectedness of the region.

## Beyond the Arena: Exploring the Real Lives of Gladiators



The November release of *Gladiator 2* has the Kelsey Museum thinking anew about the foremost athletes of the Roman world. In movies about gladiators, Hollywood often depicts enslaved men engaged in big, bloody fights with a significant death toll, but what was life in the arena really like? Who were these gladiators, and how were they viewed by Roman society? “Gladiators: Life in the Arena”—a new Kelsey in Focus display open on November 19—seeks to offer a deeper, more authentic insight into their world.

Roman gladiators were human beings with complex stories. They could be enslaved individuals, but they also could be free men and even women. The Kelsey’s exhibition shows how they trained, lived, and survived in an arena where the mortality rate was much lower than one

might think. Learn about their celebrity status, the care they received from on-site medics, and the calculated risks they took—paralleling athletes who participate in full-contact sports today.

Objects on display include historically accurate armor replicas, a brick from the Colosseum, funeral monuments of known gladiators, and gladiatorial memorabilia from the Kelsey’s collection—not so different from today’s Block M-branded collectibles. The exhibition also connects to other displays in the museum, examining such topics as a gladiatorial diet and the construction of the Colosseum. Be sure to catch the premiere of *Gladiator 2* on November 22, and check the Kelsey Museum website for gladiator-related programs throughout the academic year!

# Looking Back, Looking Forward

## 100 Years of Archaeological Research

By Emily Allison-Siepe

The year 2024 marks the centennial of Kelsey Museum-sponsored archaeological research. Since 1924, more than two dozen excavation and survey projects across 12 countries in the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East have yielded vital insights into the ancient world. The first of these such Kelsey-related projects took place at Karanis, Egypt, and Antioch of Pisidia, Turkey—together launching a 100-year history of discovery and study.

Francis W. Kelsey's interest in uncovering the ancient world began long before the first trowel touched the dirt at either of these two sites. A professor of Latin language and literature at the University of Michigan, Kelsey began collecting artifacts for teaching purposes in the 1890s. In 1920, while traveling to Egypt to acquire papyri, Kelsey was dismayed by the treatment he witnessed at Graeco-Roman sites, particularly their destruction stemming from the process of object collection.

In a move that set him apart from his contemporaries—many of whom viewed objects from past civilizations merely as tokens—Kelsey initiated excavations at Karanis, Egypt, with support from the newly formed Near East Research fund. His goals were lofty: to record and interpret the archaeology of the site, ultimately to reconstruct the “total environment of life in Graeco-Roman Egypt.”

Karanis was identified as a suitable candidate for Michigan's excavations in the fall of 1924—fertilizer diggers seeking nitrogen-rich soil at the site had previously revealed papyri, glass, and other archaeological materials—but it

was not until early 1925 that work commenced (FIGS. 1–2). Located in the Fayum region of Egypt, the farming community of Karanis (modern Kom Aushim) was established under Ptolemy II Philadelphus around 250 BCE. The settlement was eventually abandoned by its inhabitants and partially blanketed by the sands of the shifting desert.

From the outset, Karanis revealed itself to be a rich source of information about life in Graeco-Roman Egypt. In addition to papyri that revealed much about the town's financial, legal, political, and social exchanges, excavators unearthed tens of thousands of other artifacts that provided an unmatched view into the daily lives of ancient people, from furniture and foodstuffs to toys and tools. The sheer wealth of objects and extent of structures preserved were further enhanced by the new archaeological techniques the Michigan team employed: surveying the mounds prior to digging; creating detailed plans of the site; excavating methodically, level by level and room by room; recording finds and observations as they occurred; and photographing artifacts and contexts. These methods helped lay the groundwork for modern archaeological practices employed around the world today.

As researchers were getting permits squared away at Karanis in late 1924, work was wrapping up at Antioch of Pisidia, also supported by funds from the Committee on Near East Research (FIGS. 3–4). Located on the slopes of the Sultan Dağ mountain range in Turkey, Antioch was originally founded in the 3rd century BCE by the Seleucid dynasty.



**Figure 1.** A view looking over Karanis, Egypt, as captured by George R. Swain during excavations in the 1920s. One of the village's largest granaries is visible in the foreground (KM neg. no. 7.2368).





**Figure 2.** University of Michigan excavations at Karanis, Egypt, 1920s (KM neg. no. 0428).



**Figure 3.** Workmen watch as a researcher makes a squeeze of an inscription in Yalivadj, Turkey, May 1924 (KM neg. no. KR 031.09).



**Figure 4.** Blocks with a relief of a standard bearer from the city gate at Antioch, Turkey, August 1924 (KM neg. no. KR 110.04).

It was later reestablished as a Roman colony by Emperor Augustus in 25 BCE, ensuring military stability and serving a strategic role at the crossroads of major roads in Asia Minor. Antioch was also a center of Saint Paul’s missionary activities and later became the capital of the province of Pisidia.

Explorations at Antioch in the early 1900s had revealed some 60 fragments of one of the few surviving copies of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, an inscription extolling the achievements of the titular empire. When the University of Michigan expedition began in May—under the direction of David M. Robinson and with the assistance of nearly 200 local workmen—the team recovered approximately 200 additional fragments of the *Res Gestae*. Throughout this process, workers found buildings and architectural features indicative of the public projects and infrastructural improvements that took place under Roman rule, including a large city square, a monumental gateway, a bath complex, and an extensive stone aqueduct.

Although a second Michigan season at Antioch never materialized, the site has since 1924 been researched by archaeologists from several other nations. Meanwhile, journals, correspondence, and photographs in the Kelsey

Museum’s archives detail the excavation, the objects uncovered, and their historical and artistic importance. The initial work at Karanis, however, launched a series of excavations that continued until 1935. Over 45,000 artifacts from the site—granted to the University of Michigan by the Egyptian government throughout the 11-year project—now form a major part of the Kelsey Museum’s collections and represent an important assemblage of daily-life objects from Graeco-Roman Egypt.

Equally as significant is the scholarly study these artifacts continue to generate, such as the investigation of ancient color undertaken by Kelsey Museum conservators ([sites.lsa.umich.edu/color-roman-egypt](https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/color-roman-egypt)) and Laura Motta and team’s ongoing project on the agriculture, diet, and nutrition of the Graeco-Roman past ([research.kuleuven.be/portal/en/project/3H210784](https://research.kuleuven.be/portal/en/project/3H210784)). More than a century later, the meticulous excavations of the Kelsey’s earliest projects continue to yield new revelations about the ancient world. ▲

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**Emily Allison-Siep** is the communications editor at the Kelsey Museum.

# The Persian Daric Hoard

## Gold Coins Found at Notion

By Christopher Ratté

Overlooking the Aegean Sea in western Turkey (FIG. 1), the ancient Ionian Greek city of Notion was renowned for its military harbor. Five years of archaeological survey carried out between 2014 and 2018 offered valuable insights into Notion's tumultuous history in the Hellenistic period, from the conquest of Alexander the Great to the advent of Roman rule.

Now, a recent find unearthed in a new program of excavations begun in 2022 offers a deeper and richer picture of the city and its military history: a literal pot of gold, found beneath the courtyard of a Hellenistic house.

The Notion Archaeological Project is sponsored by the University of Michigan and Kelsey Museum in cooperation with Sinop University and authorized by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Michigan personnel in addition to me include Kelsey Conservator Suzanne Davis, Architecture Professor Kathy Velikov, IT Specialist Peter Knoop, and several students in the Interdepartmental Program in Ancient Mediterranean Art and Archaeology and the Department of Classical Studies. The codirector is Hazar Kaba, associate professor of archaeology at Sinop University in northern Turkey.

Notion's best-preserved remains date to the Hellenistic period—between the 3rd and 1st centuries BCE—but the excavation of a large courtyard house in the center of the city had provided hints of earlier phases of habitation (FIG. 2), including fragments of 5th-century pottery found in association with earlier walls incorporated into the foundations of the Hellenistic structure.

In July 2023, excavation beneath the area of the courtyard revealed



**Figure 1.** Notion from above. The ancient city is located on the western coast of Turkey. Photo courtesy of the Notion Archaeological Project.



**Figure 2.** Excavations of the house where the coins were found, west of the city's agora, 2023. Photo courtesy of the Notion Archaeological Project.

a hoard of gold coins, buried in a small pot. These coins show a figure of a kneeling archer (FIG. 3), the characteristic design of the Persian daric—a type of coin issued by

the Persian Empire and probably minted at Sardis, 60 miles northeast of Notion. According to the Greek historian Xenophon, a single daric was equivalent to a soldier's pay for

a month. The hoard was found in the corner of a room in a structure buried by the Hellenistic house. Presumably, it was stored there for safekeeping and, for some reason, never retrieved.

The discovery of such a valuable find in a controlled archaeological excavation is very rare. Other hoards of darics are known, but almost all have been found by farmers or looters, and their archaeological contexts are lost. Professor Andrew Meadows of Oxford University describes the Notion hoard as “a spectacular find... of the highest importance.”

Notion, along with the other Greek cities on the west coast of Turkey, was incorporated into the Persian Empire in the mid-6th century BCE. It was freed from Persian rule in the early 5th century but reintegrated into the empire in the early 4th century. Notion remained a Persian possession until the conquest of Alexander the Great in 334 BCE.

Because the primary function of the daric is believed to be the payment of mercenary troops, it is

possible that the gold hoard was associated with military operations in the area around Notion. During much of the 5th century BCE, Notion lay under Athenian domination. The conflicting loyalties of the inhabitants of Notion and nearby cities, which occupied a border region between the Persian and Athenian spheres of influence, are illustrated by a dramatic episode related by the Greek historian Thucydides.

Between 430 and 427 BCE, a group of Persian sympathizers from the nearby city of Colophon occupied part of Notion with the help of Greek and “barbarian” mercenaries. In 427, an Athenian general attacked and killed the pro-Persian mercenaries after luring their commander into a trap. The Persian sympathizers were then expelled, and Notion was reorganized under Athenian supervision. This is exactly the kind of sequence of events that could have led to both the deposition and the loss of this hoard, but it is not the only possibility. In 406 BCE, a decisive naval battle between Athens

and Sparta was fought off the coast of Notion, which the Athenians were using as a naval base. It is also possible that the deposition of the hoard was not associated with a specific event but simply represents the savings of a retired soldier or wealthy citizen who died unexpectedly.

The 2024 field season at Notion has now wrapped up, but our work is by no means finished. It is our hope that the continued excavation will clarify the archaeological context of the hoard, while the study of the coins—now in the care of the Ephesus Archaeological Museum—will provide further evidence for the date, function, and historical implications of this remarkable find. ▲

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**Christopher Ratté** is the director of the Notion Archaeological Project ([sites.lsa.umich.edu/notionproject](https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/notionproject)) and professor of ancient Mediterranean art and archaeology at the University of Michigan.



**Figure 3.** One of the Persian darics found in 2023, showing a kneeling archer on one side and a punch mark on the other. Photo courtesy of the Notion Archaeological Project.

# City Beneath the Sand

## Excavating the Ancient Settlement at Jebel Barkal, Sudan

By Geoff Emberling

The Kelsey Museum’s Jebel Barkal Archaeological Project has been focused on site protection and support for our archaeological colleagues in Sudan since the civil war began there in April 2023, as Suzanne Davis and I reported in the Kelsey Museum Newsletter last fall. But we have also been engaged in more traditional archaeological research at Jebel Barkal since the end of 2018 (with a yearlong break for the pandemic), and we would like to present an update on what we are learning about the ancient site itself.

### Background

Located close to the Nile River in northern Sudan, Jebel Barkal—“jebel” means “mountain” in Arabic—is a rock outcrop just over 100 meters high (FIGS. 1–2). It is distinguished by a pinnacle of rock facing the river that resembles several symbols of kingship in the Nile Valley, including the White Crown of Upper Egypt and the uraeus-serpent often shown on Egyptian and later Kushite royal crowns.

The earliest cultural remains from the site are those of the early kingdom of Kush (ca. 1700 BCE). We suspect that the jebel itself would have been important in that early period; evidence suggests that Kushites thought one or more gods resided in the rock outcrops.

After 1500 BCE, Jebel Barkal was captured by the invading army of Egypt’s New Kingdom, which built a fortified settlement there called Napata. The site would be the southernmost outpost of the Egyptian empire—perhaps in part because of the religious significance of the jebel itself, but likely also for its political and economic importance due to its location on trade routes across the surrounding deserts.



Figure 1. Kush around 600 BCE, including the location of Jebel Barkal. Map by Lorene Sterner.

After the collapse of the Egyptian empire by 1170 BCE, the site was renewed by a new dynasty of Kush beginning in about 750 BCE, with constructions by the kings Kashta and his successor, Piankhy. These kings conquered Egypt successively and began what would be known as the 25th Dynasty of Egypt

(ca. 750–663 BCE). But they were very much part of a Kushite dynasty that we call the Napatan Dynasty, which continued to rule Kush for centuries after. The Napatan Dynasty brought not only wealth to Kush from its conquest of Egypt but also architects, scribes, and sculptors who built palaces and temples (particularly the massive



**Figure 2.** Jebel Barkal from the East Mound, with our second excavation area (Area B) in the foreground. Photo by Henrik Brahe, 2023.

**Figure 3.** This 10-foot-high monumental statue of King Anlamani, who reigned about 620–600 BCE, was found by George Reisner in 1916 excavations next to the Amun Temple at Jebel Barkal. Photo courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



temple dedicated to the ram-headed god Amun of Napata), inscribed monumental stone stelae using Egyptian hieroglyphic script, and crafted monumental royal statues (FIG. 3). They would later use the site for the pyramid burials of kings and queens of Kush.

Until our project at Jebel Barkal, the later history of the site had been somewhat less well-known. The locations of Kushite royal burials—after having been in the area of Napata for nearly 500 years—were moved 250 kilometers southeast to the site of Meroe for what is known as the Meroitic period (ca. 270 BCE–300 CE). Because the Kushite court was highly mobile, the idea of a fixed “capital city” is perhaps not fitting for this empire. But even with the move of the royal burials, Napata remained an important urban center in the Meroitic period with monumental constructions, including a group of royal pyramids mostly dating to the 1st century BCE—some for queens who reigned as sole

rulers—and a new palace built by King Natakamani in the 1st century CE.

During this period, Kush was in trade contact with Ptolemaic Egypt—and later, with Roman Egypt—as well as the wider Mediterranean. Soon after the Roman conquest of Egypt in 31 BCE, the Kushite army fought against Rome for control over the border region near Aswan in Egypt. As the Roman historian Strabo wrote, the Kushite army was led into battle by “Queen Candace—a masculine sort of woman and blind in one eye.” This was a mixing of her name and title; “Kandake” was a Kushite title for queen.

Napata had declined as an urban center by 300 CE. It was later inhabited by a small community of Christians who built their homes inside the grand Temple of Amun and buried their dead outside it.

### Research Questions

Jebel Barkal had been documented by European and American travelers

since the 1820s and excavated by archaeologists as early as the 1890s. The first major excavation was that of George Reisner, who excavated the site on a large scale on behalf of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Harvard University from 1916 to 1920. After Reisner, excavations resumed at the site following a lapse of more than 50 years: starting in the 1970s, an Italian team focused on the area of the Natakamani Palace, and an American team led by Tim Kendall beginning in the 1980s—which later became a joint US–Sudanese project—resumed more careful work in the area of temples that had been Reisner’s focus.

In 2016, Tim Kendall offered me a chance to take his place as the US-based codirector at Jebel Barkal. It was thrilling to think about working

at such a large and important urban center of ancient Kush. We formed a joint project between the Kelsey Museum and the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (Sudan's antiquities department), with El-Hassan Ahmed Mohamed as my codirector and with a multidisciplinary team of international and Sudanese specialists and students.

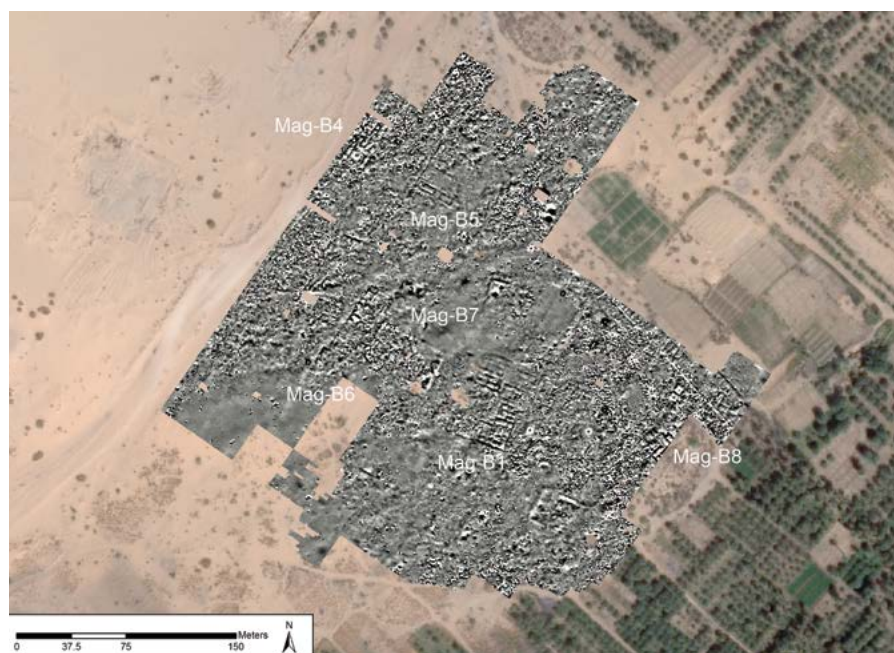
Because of the history of excavation at the site—with its focus on temples, palaces, and pyramids—some scholars had assumed that Napata was essentially a religious center. But my immediate impression, as an archaeologist initially trained in working on the mounds of ancient Mesopotamian cities, was that the larger urban settlement at Barkal had not yet been adequately investigated or even located. As a result, there was a great deal that we did not know about the inhabitants of ancient Napata. What did they eat, for example? Where did they live? Where were their workshops? Did the kings and queens entirely control the ancient economy, or was there any independent economic activity? Were diverse ethnic groups represented within the population? Was there evidence of ancient urban planning?

These questions structured our initial investigations, which first aimed to locate at least one area of ancient occupation that was not previously known. A large, flat area next to groves of date palm trees (FIG. 4)—eventually termed the East Mound—was promising, even though its surface was covered by sand, grasses, and some modern garbage. A brief magnetic gradiometry (“magnetometry”) survey in 2016 by U-M graduate student Gregory Tucker showed that the area preserved an urban density of remains. Greg returned to complete a full survey of the area in 2018 (FIG. 5).

The results of the magnetometry survey showed a large urban settlement with a number of clearly visible buildings, some apparent streets, areas with remains that were not entirely clear, and other blank areas on the map. We



**Figure 4.** View from the top of Jebel Barkal onto the ancient city. The Amun Temple is in the foreground; the East Mound is a rounded area next to the palm groves. Photo by Raymond Silverman, 2016.



**Figure 5.** Magnetic gradiometry plan of the East Mound at Jebel Barkal. Plan by Gregory Tucker, 2019.

subsequently learned that the magnetometer was only able to read about 30 centimeters below the surface and that the blank sections on the magnetic plan were areas where the overlying sand was thicker than that.

### Excavations and Findings

Of course, there were many questions of interest that we could not resolve from a geophysical plan (including the date of these structures), so we began to dig on the East Mound. Our first

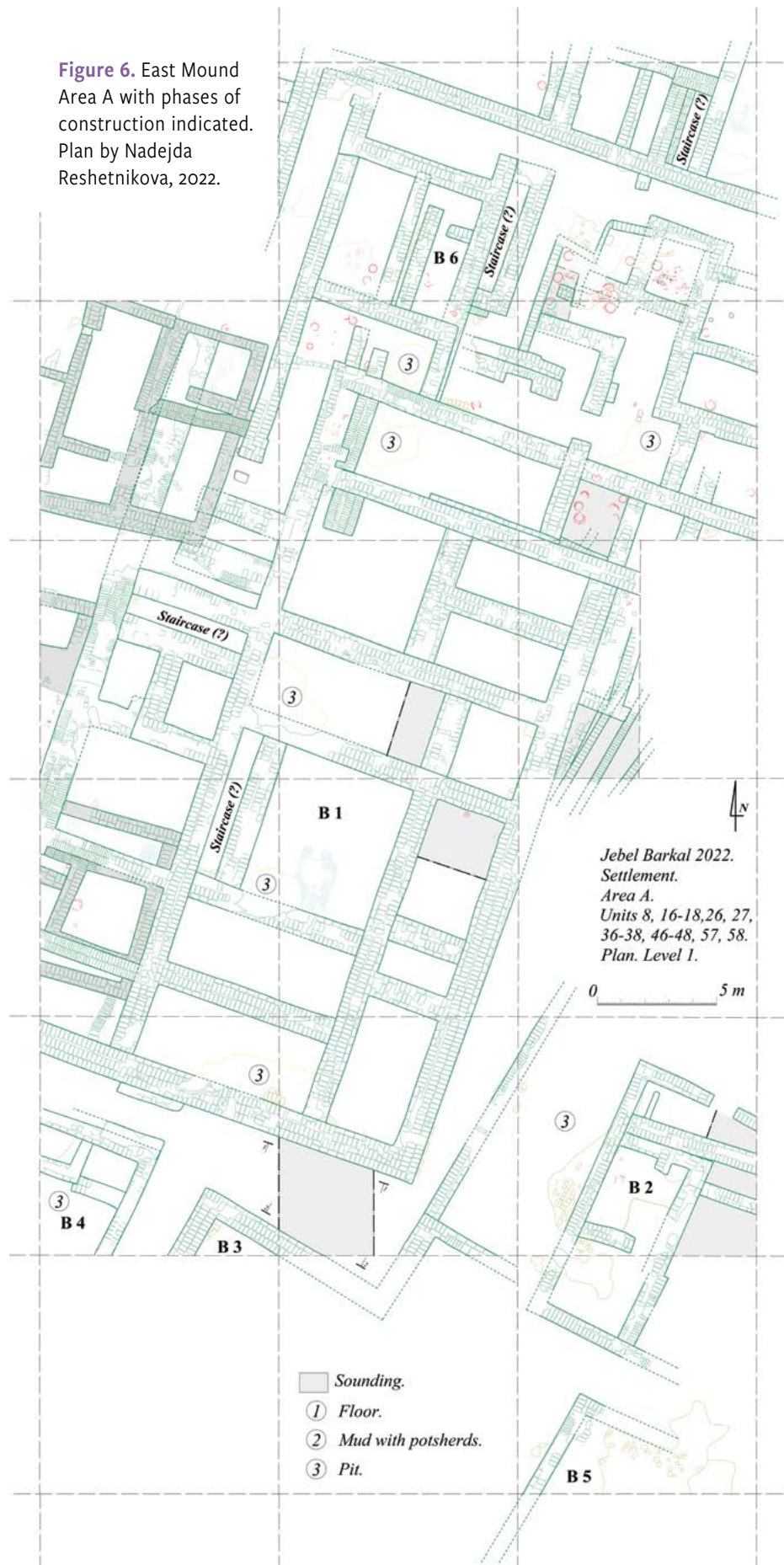
excavation in this area focused on the clearest building in the magnetometry survey. After three seasons of work (FIG. 6), we were able to clear a large area of mudbrick architecture and identify a complex pattern of building and rebuilding that is typical of urban stratigraphy (termed Area A). The largest building in the area was preserved only as a foundation, but it would have been built on a platform measuring about 30 by 20 meters. To the north was an area of small rooms with a high density of small cooking facilities, including cooking pots and hearths. To the southeast was a smaller freestanding house.

Finds from this area were all Meroitic in date (2nd century BCE–1st century CE). Ceramics showed regular trade with Egypt and less frequent exchange with the wider Mediterranean. Analysis of animal bones from this area was conducted by our beloved Kelsey colleague Richard Redding, who sadly passed away last year. Richard found that 85 percent of the animal bones were cattle, showing a strong focus on high-status food. Analysis of botanical remains revealed a focus on the northern grain crops of wheat and barley rather than the southern grains (sorghum and millets). These archaeobotanical analyses were the first done at Barkal—allowing us to begin identifying how the city was fed.

Our excavation also recovered a large deposit of nearly 3,000 pieces of sealing clay. Of these, 300 had been stamped by seal rings, an innovation of Meroitic-period Nubia that resulted from contact with the Mediterranean. The clay had been used to seal jars or other containers—likely filled with grain, oil, and perhaps wine—that were delivered to the large building from other parts of the city. The seals were marks of authority by the people who oversaw the filling and closing of the jars and thus give an impression of the structure of the site’s administration. Coincidentally, we also found an ancient bronze seal ring with an elephant design (FIG. 7) on the surface of the site near our excavation.

In our other main excavation area (Area B), we focused on what appeared on the magnetometry plan to be a long street. Excavation showed that was indeed the case. In two seasons of work, we have cleared over 70 meters of the street, measuring up to 6 meters wide and lined with large buildings (FIG. 8). This area has an industrial or commercial character rather than a residential one since we have not found

**Figure 6.** East Mound Area A with phases of construction indicated. Plan by Nadejda Reshetnikova, 2022.





**Figure 7.** Bronze seal ring with an elephant design. Meroitic period (ca. 200 BCE–100 CE). Surface find, East Mound, Jebel Barkal. Photo by Suzanne Davis, 2023.



**Figure 8.** Long street and buildings in Area B, looking to the northwest. Photo by Sami Elamin, 2022.

many objects that would be typical of domestic occupation. Rather, where we have excavated one of the large structures in more detail, we have found a concentration of cooking features similar to what we had seen in our first excavation area. Since both areas seem to focus on producing food—but not on housing people—we are considering the possibility that they were used to make food for others. Perhaps these spaces were like restaurants that fed workers and traders, or perhaps they produced food for temple or palace staff.

In one of the structures in Area B, we excavated a sounding 1.5 meters deep that produced a sequence of layers extending from about 100 BCE to 700 BCE—into the Napatan period. This suggests that even though Napatan pottery is scarcely visible on the surface of this part of the city, it must have been part of the ancient settlement of the Napatan kings.

A related but separate project has involved exploring the area surrounding the temples and palaces at the site to understand better how they fit into the

broader ancient city. A ground penetrating radar survey (FIG. 9) showed that the Napatan palace at the site was not isolated, as previous approaches to excavation had suggested, but was rather in the midst of a dense urban settlement, with streets and large, well-constructed elite houses (which we called “villas”) providing a neighborhood for the palace.

### Conclusions

This brief overview only scratches the surface of our research at Jebel Barkal over the past eight years. Even with the civil war in Sudan still raging as I write, our team—both in Sudan and abroad—is continuing to think about, analyze, and write on what we are learning about the ancient city of Napata, as well as the broader implications it has for understanding the structure and history of the ancient empire of Kush. ▲



**Geoff Emberling** is an associate research scientist at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology and codirector of the Jebel Barkal Archaeological Project ([sites.lsa.umich.edu/jbap](https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/jbap)).

**Figure 9.** Ground penetrating radar plan of the Napatan Palace (B1200) at Jebel Barkal, showing dense urban occupation. Plan by Pawel Wolf, 2024.



# A Milestone in Archaeological Education: IPAMAA's Golden Jubilee

Just as the Kelsey Museum is marking a centennial of archaeological fieldwork in 2024, the Interdepartmental Program in Ancient Mediterranean Art and Archaeology (IPAMAA)—formerly the Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology (IPCAA)—is celebrating a major milestone this year: 50 years of educating budding archaeologists.

Although this U-M graduate program began in 1969, its current configuration was not established until 1973–1974. John Pedley and Sharon Herbert, both classics professors specializing in the ancient Greek world, made up the program's faculty in 1973. A year later, Elaine Gazda and John Humphrey joined them, enriching IPAMAA's focus on Roman studies that now serves as one of the program's hallmarks.

Over the next two decades, the number of IPAMAA archaeological faculty doubled with the addition of several other U-M scholarly giants: Margaret Cool Root, Thelma Thomas, David Mattingly, Susan Alcock, and John Cherry—the latter two of whom introduced to the program a new theoretical angle. These early years were also characterized by the launch of a strong field research program, which

included investigations at Tel Anafa, Israel; Carthage, Tunisia; and elsewhere.

Since the mid-1990s, the makeup of IPAMAA faculty has undergone further shifts, with new waves of experts representing a wide range of academic and research interests. The group today consists of six core faculty members, each of whom also shares their time with Classical Studies, History of Art, the Kelsey Museum, or a combination thereof: Natalie Abell, Nicola Barham, Laura Motta, Lisa Nevett, Christopher Ratté, and Nic Terrenato. The cohort of students enrolled in the program stands some two dozen strong, likewise possessing a variety of backgrounds, museum and field experiences, and research emphases. Current students also contribute to faculty-led research focused on various parts of the Mediterranean, including active fieldwork projects in Greece, Turkey, and Italy.

More than 50 years after its founding, IPAMAA is a leading program in the archaeology of the Mediterranean, educating students who shape the present and future of the discipline.



Right: U-M students excavating Hellenistic fine wares at Tel Anafa, 1980. Inset: Students installing amphorae in Tunisia's Latma Museum, 1990s.

# New Faces at the Kelsey Museum

In 2024, the Kelsey Museum welcomed several new staff members and research fellows. As always, the addition of staff provides exciting opportunities for growth, new ideas and synergies, and institutional reflection. Please join us in welcoming (or, in some cases, welcoming back) Katherine Burge, Chris Motz, Shannon Ness, Kathryn Peneyra, Will Pestle, and Bruce Worden. We look forward to sharing the innovative projects and dynamic initiatives these individuals help bring to life!



A postdoctoral fellow in the History of Art Department, **Katherine Burge** will assist with the installation of the Kelsey's Crossroads of Culture gallery during the 2024–2025 academic year. Katherine is an archaeologist specializing in the ancient Middle East and eastern Mediterranean. She received her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, where she also served as a curatorial research associate at the Penn Museum. Her research focuses on urban societies, socioeconomic organization, and information recording in Bronze and Iron Age Mesopotamia, employing an interdisciplinary approach. Katherine has excavated at a number of sites in Turkey, Kurdistan, and Iraq. She is also interested in the more recent histories of colonialism and internationalism in Middle Eastern archaeology, museums, and cultural heritage policy.



**Chris Motz** serves as the Kelsey's manager of digital assets. Chris is a Roman archaeologist and a specialist in digital technologies and methods. He brings 13 years of experience guiding collaborative efforts to record, analyze, publish, and archive archaeological data. Chris is currently involved with fieldwork and publication projects at the coastal Punic/Roman city of Tharros, Sardinia, and at Pompeii's Porta Stabia neighborhood. He has previously conducted fieldwork in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Morocco, France, Greece, Turkey, and Belize. Chris looks forward to working with the Kelsey's impressive collections and collaborating with the university's archaeological community. As a childhood Michigan fan, he is excited to once again get decked out in maize and blue.



As university programs coordinator, **Shannon Ness** leads tours and object-handling sessions for university classes and assists with other programming for the Education Department. Shannon holds an MA in art history from the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, and is working toward the completion of her doctorate in the University of Michigan's Interdepartmental Program for Ancient Mediterranean Art and Archaeology. Her dissertation explores the intersections between museum studies and community-engaged archaeology. Shannon has worked on field projects in Turkey, Italy, and Sudan. In her current role, she is excited to help students discover personal connections with the ancient world. When not at the Kelsey Museum, Shannon can be found in the pottery studio or an independent bookstore.



**Kathryn Peneyra** is a visiting master's student from the UCLA/Getty Conservation program. Kathryn grew up in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and studied chemistry during her undergraduate degree at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. Her advisor at Carleton introduced her to the field of conservation, and her love for site-based work—such as her recent work at Kaman-Kalehöyük in Türkiye and in the Native Village of Quinhagak in Alaska—steered her in the direction of archaeological conservation. While in the Conservation Department at the Kelsey, Kathryn looks forward to working on a diverse collection of archaeological materials in a museum setting, experimenting with research projects, and experiencing more site-based conservation.



Director of Education **Will Pestle** is an anthropological archaeologist specializing in the lifeways of the ancient Indigenous peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. His research has focused on subsistence, human-environment interaction, mobility, exchange, and the emergence of social complexity, resulting in over 70 publications. In addition to conducting fieldwork across four continents, Will has held a variety of museum roles, from collections-based research to collections management at the Field Museum of Natural History to curating exhibitions at the Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami, where he was also a professor and department chair. Will is returning to U-M and the Kelsey, where he began his archaeological adventures as a student employee almost 30 years ago.



**Bruce Worden** has been a scientific illustrator and museum exhibit designer since 1997. He joined the U-M Museum of Anthropological Archaeology as an illustrator/graphic artist in 2022 and now serves a dual role as an illustrator both there and at the Kelsey. Bruce has worked in publishing for the last 20 years, helping scientists in many fields communicate their work to a wider audience. He has created historical maps, architectural renderings and details, and descriptive illustrations directly from museum specimens and field observation. Bruce prides himself in producing accurate and stylistically consistent work that meets publication requirements and deadlines. It is sometimes said that “there is no scientific outreach without art,” and Bruce is excited to bring his passion for outreach to the Kelsey.



Meanwhile, IPAMAA welcomed one new student this fall—**Elena Navarre**. Elena earned her BA with honors from the University of Texas at Austin in 2022. Her thesis focused on domestic and public water usage within the city of Rome during the late stages of the Roman Empire. In the spring of 2024, Elena completed her MA in classical studies at U-M. She has excavated at Argilos and Kerdyllion in Northern Greece and has served as a research assistant for various academic projects, notably the *Black Classicists in Texas* exhibition ([bcatx.org](http://bcatx.org)).

Elena's research focuses on Roman art and architecture and its relation to water usage—specifically within fountains and bathhouses. She is also interested in museum studies and has received a Museum Studies Bridging Disciplines Program certificate at UT Austin, which she completed alongside her various internships at Austin-based museums and archives. Elena aims to intertwine her academic interests with her passion and enthusiasm for museums and public outreach.

# Pedley Updates

*During the summer of 2024, three IPAMAA students received the John G. Pedley Travel and Research Award, a grant program that helps fund archaeological research and travel for graduate students. Hear from Lauren Alberti, Caroline Everts, and Abigail Staub about their summer projects.*

## **Lauren Alberti**

I am so thankful to have been one of the recipients of the Pedley award this summer. From May through the middle of June, I completed a third year assisting Professor Natalie Abell with reevaluating previously excavated ceramic material from the Bronze Age settlement of Ayia Irini on the island of Kea, Greece. As a part of this project, we are looking for evidence of metallurgy at the site, which includes examining pottery for mend holes (evidence for the use of lead clamps, some of which have even survived), as well as crucibles used in metal production. Throughout my three years on this project, I have learned so much about Aegean Bronze Age pottery and local craft production.

From June through early July, I had the opportunity to visit sites and museums in Athens, Crete, Santorini, and



Lauren Alberti on a hike to the Minoan peak sanctuary on Mount Juktos on the island of Crete.

Paros. The purpose of this trip was to help me think more deeply about my dissertation project, which is still in its earliest stages. By visiting multiple Bronze Age sites and archaeological museums, I was able to develop the kinds of questions I am interested in asking and to consider the types of data I might be able to use for my research. Some highlights of these travels include visiting the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, the Bronze Age settlement of Akrotiri, the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, the Minoan palace at Phaistos, and the ancient marble quarries on the island of Paros.

## **Caroline Everts**

This past summer, I was fortunate to receive the John G. Pedley Travel and Research Award, which allowed me to travel to Turkey for ten weeks to conduct my own research, as well as to participate in the Notion Archaeological Project. Using this award, I spent the first week of my summer traveling down the western coast of Turkey visiting multiple sites and museums, including Pergamon, Magnesia, Miletus, Halicarnassus, and Heracleia, among



Caroline Everts in the stadium at Aphrodisias, where she traveled as a group during her time at Notion.



Images from Abigail Staub's summer: working with field students to sort ceramics at Gabii (left) and a rubbing of an epitaph (above).

others. It was incredible to explore these locations, and these visits will certainly be helpful in the coming years as I write my dissertation!

I spent the remainder of my summer working on the Notion Archaeological Project, directed by Dr. Christopher Ratté. While at Notion—a Hellenistic city on the coast of Anatolia—I primarily worked with the ceramics found in one of the houses being excavated. The variety of local ceramics was incredible, with pieces ranging from the 5th century BCE to the 1st century CE. Familiarizing myself with ceramics through different periods, especially that of the late Hellenistic period, has been crucial as I write my prospectus. I also visited several other sites in Turkey with my colleagues, including Lebedus, Aphrodisias, and Myonessus.

I am confident that the knowledge and skills I have learned this summer will be incredibly useful as I continue my graduate career, and as such, I am extremely grateful for the support of the Pedley award that allowed me to have such a wonderful and productive summer!

### **Abigail Staub**

This summer, the Pedley grant helped support my work at the University of Michigan's Gabii Project, where I served as the project's 2024 finds supervisor. In this role, I taught field students about the site's ceramic wares, guided them in learning to sort and wash ceramics, lectured on special topics (particularly on how to read and transcribe funerary inscriptions), and entered data regarding the season's finds, with the help of the project's incredible finds team.

The grant also supported my participation in the British School at Rome's biennial Postgraduate Course in

Epigraphy, an epigraphic training course with intellectual peers from around the world, including archaeologists, museum professionals, and doctoral students in related fields. The training course was an eight-day intensive, incorporating numerous museum and site visits, archival access, and specialized training workshops in archaeological drawings, rubbings, squeezes, photography and publication of inscriptions, navigation of inscription databases, and related topics.

Participants were accepted to the epigraphy course based on their own research projects, which they presented in a conference paper at the culmination of the intensive. For the course, I was selected to continue my investigation of a vibrant dataset of over 400 Latin epitaphs by and for Roman Imperial grandparents. I undertook a case study of such epitaphs within the Italian peninsula, honing in on co-dedicator groups, chosen language, and other features of the inscriptions. The dataset, which I hope to publish in the future, sheds light on the complexities of the nonnuclear family unit and the implications of the dynamic Roman life cycle. Most importantly, it suggests the potential for grandmothers—especially paternal grandmothers—to participate actively in the lives of grandchildren, forming powerful intergenerational bonds. Thus the inscriptions provide an opportunity to return agency to the underlooked demographic of female elders and complicate traditional perceptions of Roman family structures. The support of the Pedley grant enabled the completion of this work and a myriad of training opportunities, which will strengthen my research moving forward.

# Grad Student Updates

**Leah Bernardo-Ciddio** (IPAMAA) successfully defended her dissertation, “Ceramics, Craft Communities, and Cultural Interactions in the First Millennium Adriatic: Production and Trade of Apulian Matt-Painted Pottery,” on Thursday, March 14, 2024. Leah’s dissertation uncovers the dynamics of Adriatic societies in the Iron Age. “By comparing pottery production on both sides of the Adriatic, Leah has broken new ground for our understanding of craftspeople’s travels and activities,” said her advisor, Nic Terrenato.

IPAMAA’s **Joey Frankl** received a 2024 Rackham Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award for his exemplary teaching in Professor Meg Foster’s Great Books 191 course and Professor Christopher Ratté’s Classical Archaeology 223 on “Greeks and Barbarians,” as well as his teaching in Classical Archaeology 221, Classical Civilization 101, and Classical Civilization 385. The Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Awards celebrate the work and accomplishments of GSIs who have shown strong commitment, creativity, and skill in the classroom.

**Laurel Fricker**, an IPAMAA student, was awarded the Edward Capps Fellowship at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens for 2023–2024, which she deferred to 2024–2025. As an advanced fellow at the school, Laurel will be in Athens for the academic year conducting dissertation research.

**Machal Gradoz** (IPAMAA) successfully defended her dissertation on Monday, June 10, 2024. “Of Sherds and Stones: Transformation and Continuity in the Ceramic and Epigraphic Records of Late Hellenistic–Early Roman Epirus,” engages in theoretically informed

archaeological study of ceramics and inscriptions to explore local reactions to Romanization in the region of ancient Epirus. Advisor Christopher Ratté praised Machal’s sound research and valuable methodological interventions, further commenting on the dissertation’s great historical interest.

**Allison Grenda**, PhD candidate in the Department of the History of Art, presented a paper titled “Rethinking Abandonment Narratives in Early Byzantine Towns” at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, England,

this past July. She also presented another paper, “Portrait of a Family: The Kratigos-Mytilene Hoard as Assemblage and Microhistory,” at the Byzantine Studies Association of North America Annual Conference in New York City in October.

This summer, IPAMAA student **Erica Venturo** was a field supervisor on the Marzuolo Archaeological Project in Italy. A short film was recently made on the excavation project to celebrate its five seasons of work, which she was a part of and was interviewed for!

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## Staff Updates

Research Scientist **Geoff Emberling** was not able to go into the field in January 2024 because of the ongoing civil war in Sudan. His work and that of his team has focused on supporting Sudanese colleagues with funding and logistical assistance at El-Kurru and Jebel Barkal, as well as beginning work on publication of their archaeological results.

During the past year, the team has submitted an article on the excavation at Jebel Barkal and a chapter on community engagement work at the same site. An additional article on community heritage work at El-Kurru appeared in *The Routledge Companion to Publicly Engaged Humanities Scholarship*.

Geoff taught a new course on “anti-colonial archaeology” in fall 2023 that was part of the inspiration for the Kelsey to think about launching a new Center for Community Archaeology and Heritage (see p. 11).

Over the past year, Geoff delivered papers at the African Art Department of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, the Arts Council of the African Studies Association conference in Chicago, and the Meroitic Studies conference in Münster, Germany.

He gave online presentations for the British Association of Near Eastern Archaeology; the University of Helsinki Ancient and Medieval Middle East Seminar; and the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) Cultural Heritage Symposium.

Finally, the project at Jebel Barkal was featured in two films—*Lost Cities Revealed with Albert Lin* on National Geographic (season 1, episode 2) and *Expeditions Unknown* with Josh Gates on Discovery (season 11, episode 2).

With the fall semester well underway, Collections Manager **Michelle Fontenot** reports that the class use of objects from the Kelsey’s teaching collection is in full swing. In addition, the collections staff is working on several reorganization projects for certain cabinets in the registry to create more space and better protect objects stored within the drawers.

**Will Pestle**, the Kelsey’s director of education, looks forward to working with Shannon Ness, Stephanie Wottreng Haley, and the rest of the education team to implement new initiatives designed to bring the Kelsey to the Ann Arbor/southeast Michigan community. It is their hope that these efforts will

help widen the Kelsey Museum's impact and relevance, bringing the incredible collections and research done here to a broader and more diverse audience. The Education Department's impactful work in both K-12 and university education continues, with refinements and expansions to be made using new data-driven decision-making processes.

**Janet Richards**, the Kelsey's curator for Dynastic Egypt, has been invited as visiting professor at the University of Paris IV Sorbonne's Institute for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (ÉHESS) for the month of May 2025.

In addition to day-to-day conservation work in the lab, conservator **Caroline Roberts** is pleased to report that the second part of the special issue she had been guest editing for the *Journal of the*

*American Institute for Conservation* was published in August 2024. "Practical Approaches to Technical Research"—available at [tandfonline.com/toc/yjac20/62/2](https://tandfonline.com/toc/yjac20/62/2)—features research on a range of topics from low-tech multi-spectral imaging setups for conservators in private practice to the technical study of wall paintings in Ethiopia's Tigray region. The overall goal of this special issue was to feature conservation projects that embrace accessible research tools that can be easily replicated in settings with limited resources.

We bid a fond farewell to executive secretary **Anne Stevenson**, who recently left the Kelsey for a position at the U-M College of Engineering. As a program manager, she will assist with online credit courses and professional development opportunities.

Curator **Terry Wilfong** continues to research 20th-century artist Hamzeh Carr for an upcoming Kelsey Museum exhibition and publication. He is working on another 20th-century artist as well, Michigan's own Robert A. Thom, whose painting series on medical history includes a number of scenes of ancient medicine. Terry is currently teaching his seminar on gender in ancient Egyptian society, in conjunction with his ongoing research on possible evidence for nonbinary gender identities in ancient Egypt. He has several in-press articles awaiting publication, including a study of the fate of the cult of the Buchis bull at Hermonthis, an overview of his work on gender, and an article on artist Jim Cogswell's recent work in Portugal.

The Kelsey expresses its heartfelt thanks to **Tracey Miller** for her contributions to the Collections Department from January 2023 through July 2024. In addition to supporting daily operations, Tracey assisted with class use of objects, aided exhibit preparation, and completed a survey of collections storage to improve access and overall safety and protection of objects. Through working with the database, she also helped manage classes, object movement, and updates for publication-related information.

Her support was especially crucial during the fall 2023 semester, when the registrar was in an accident. During this challenging time, Tracey took over all aspects of collections management and classroom access, performing wonderfully while doing so. Her background—including a master's in historic preservation from Eastern Michigan University and 27 years as a volunteer with the local Cobblestone Farm Museum—meant that assuming control of the Kelsey's Collections Department went smoothly. Tracey also worked for the Kelsey in 2008 during the collection move from Newberry Building to the Upjohn Wing, which included inventory, physical relocation of objects, and assisting with the supervision of movers. Her efforts then, as now, were priceless.

In January 2024, the Kelsey said goodbye to **Cathy Person**, who had served as director of education at the museum since 2013. Throughout her tenure, Cathy had a transformative effect on the Education Department—spearheading imaginative programs and outreach strategies that strengthened the museum's engagement with K-12 students, university course participants, and the local community. Cathy also expanded and formalized the docent program, cocurated the *Ancient Color* exhibition in 2019, and oversaw the development of the DiSKO project (see below), among other initiatives.

We thank her for her dedication and service over the last ten-plus years and wish her the best in her new position leading educational programs at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia!



## ► Launch of the DiSKO Website

One of Cathy's ambitious initiatives was DiSKO, an educational outreach project that seeks to make select Kelsey Museum objects accessible online as 3-D models. After five years of work from Kelsey staff, curators, and students, DiSKO is now live at [diskoproject.kelsey.lsa.umich.edu](https://diskoproject.kelsey.lsa.umich.edu). This website provides users with detailed information about Kelsey objects, high-resolution images, and models that can be freely downloaded for use in classrooms, research projects, and 3-D printing.



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**We invite you to visit the Kelsey Museum during the upcoming holiday season. Our 2024–2025 holiday hours are as follows:**

**NOVEMBER**

- Thursday, 28th . . . . . Closed
- Friday, 29th . . . . . 11 AM–4 PM

**DECEMBER**

- Monday, 23rd, through Wednesday, 25th. . . . . Closed
- Thursday, 26th, through Sunday, 29th . . . . . 11 AM–4 PM
- Monday, 30th . . . . . Closed
- Tuesday, 31st . . . . . 11 AM–4 PM

**JANUARY**

- Wednesday, 1st . . . . . Closed

Normal museum hours resume  
Thursday, January 2nd.

*We extend our sincere appreciation and thanks to the Kelsey donor who provides support to extend our museum hours.*

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