

Initial Report

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Principle Investigator (PI) Name: (first name, last name and title i.e. Sally Smith, Assoc. Professor)

Text Response

Arthur Verhoogt, Professor

1. Describe your research project and the anticipated stages of work. (500 Words Maximum)

Text Response

This project will unite researchers to study the ancient village of Karanis in Egypt from multidisciplinary perspectives. Nearly a century ago excavators at the University of Michigan began work at Karanis, which had yielded a considerable number of papyri (scrolls and parchment containing writing) and ostraca (pottery sherds bearing writing), but also had standing architecture and well-preserved finds. They discovered that although Karanis was not abandoned as the result of a natural disaster, with all of its artifacts in place, the exceedingly dry climate had preserved structures and artifacts that ordinarily decay at other archaeological sites. The University of Michigan acquired 46,415 artifacts from Karanis through an agreement with the Egyptian government; these form the core (44%) of the Kelsey Museum's collections today. Scholars have written several volumes about Karanis papyri, ostraca, glass, textiles, pottery, coins, terracottas, and architecture, yet, due to the prevailing tendency to pigeonhole materials into narrow typological categories for publication, have rarely considered how the items functioned together within each of the more than 100 buildings excavated. It is now common, however, to study the totality of an assemblage as well as its constituent parts. This proposal represents the first attempt to gather a large team of researchers with diverse specialties (archaeology, papyrology, palaeobotany, information technology, collections management, etc.) to understand how the inhabitants of the site used these artifacts as assemblages. We will use the Spring term to plan a two-year collaborative project focused on understanding Karanis holistically. Because our project involves an enormous and diverse amount of data (from ancient artifacts to archival material to modern theory from different scholarly fields), our first task will be to identify issues, problems and potentialities involved. To begin, we have selected two structures which we expect will provide representative challenges of analytical and theoretical interpretation: Granary C65 is a large four-story structure dating from the second to fourth centuries CE that will bring to the fore issues of use and re-use over a long period of time. House C137, a three-roomed building dating from the second and first centuries BCE, contained relatively intact deposits. The work of the Spring term will include weekly meetings of the core project team to plan the steps necessary to conduct the research. Our long-term plans include several specific goals: 1. to create a Karanis Research Portal to disseminate information about the site to the general public and specialist researchers; 2. to produce a multi-authored volume highlighting the important results of our interdisciplinary research for the scholarly community; 3. to devise an exhibition for the Kelsey Museum based on the materials from some of the most interesting buildings.

2. What original contribution(s) will the project make to the humanities field(s) in which it intervenes, and to the humanities more broadly. Why is collaborative research appropriate to the project? (500 word maximum)

Text Response

Scholars have long realized that Karanis is one of the best-documented sites from the Roman world, on account of the superb preservation of organic materials. The previous piecemeal studies have improved our understanding of how the Roman state operated on the fringes of its empire. The possibilities of bringing this research further when all of its materials are studied together, in context, and by a team of researchers from various specialist backgrounds, are outstanding. We are planning our research to address several topics important to the fields of ancient history and archaeology. For instance, one question central to historical, literary, and social science investigations during the last two generations is "what was it like to live under imperial rule?" This question involves moving away from investigating the ruling elites (in Rome) to looking at the people who lived in the towns and villages of the Roman empire, including lower local elites but also the subaltern population, such as peasants and slaves. The quantity and diversity of material

from Karanis is without parallel and makes it the perfect site to address these issues. Another question involves the poorly-understood relationship between text and artifact in archaeological contexts. Current archaeological theory avoids issues surrounding written documents found during excavations when reconstructing domestic activities. This is not unsurprising because such archaeological theory is based on fieldwork in regions where household assemblages do not include texts. Our project will aim to integrate the analysis of texts with other household remains to document how the site can contribute to this debate. We anticipate that close connections can be drawn between the distribution patterns of texts and artifacts at the site. In addition, awareness of the archaeological and material context of texts would make the project useful for those studying ancient Egypt. In terms of broader contributions to the Humanities, our two-year project will address three interrelated issues: how to make material available to a wider audience than previously possible by using new digital technology; how to address physical deterioration of old "legacy" data; and how to investigate such data with current research questions and new technology. The legacy data from Karanis not only include the ancient artifacts and papyri, but also all the records including maps, photographs, motion picture footage, notebooks etc. left by the excavators in various units on campus (Kelsey Museum; Papyrology Collection; Bentley Historical Library). Our collaboration will highlight several issues involving these legacy data including their physical preservation, and the potential to make them available in a digital and easily searchable format. We see this project fitting into the context of Digital Humanities research designed to appeal to both far-flung scholars as well as the general public interested in Ancient Egypt.

3. Identify the research team members (name, department, position) and explain what the faculty/staff collaborators bring to the team. (200 word maximum)

Text Response

The research team consists of specialists in various disciplines. For the spring term we envision a core research team of five faculty and four students. The Principal Investigator, Arthur Verhoogt, has worked on several Karanis buildings and papyri. Sebastián Encina has extensive knowledge of the Kelsey Museum's holdings, as well as experience in digitizing and database creation. Brendan Haug is the Archivist of the Papyrus Collection and a specialist in environmental history. Laura Motta, an archaeobotanist, will coordinate work on the plant and animal remains from Karanis. David Stone brings experience with Roman imperial urban archaeology and a strong theoretical background. Two GSRAs and two undergraduates will be selected from among those who have previously done archival, artifact, or papyrological research. A full team of other UM specialists will be available for advice and input during the Spring term: Lisa Nevett (household archaeology); Richard Redding (zooarchaeologist); and Terry Wilfong (Greco-Roman Egypt). IT specialists (including John Weise) will give advice on building a scalable and sustainable digital preservation and access system for Karanis. All these will have more active roles in the final proposal.

4. What is the anticipated role of graduate student collaborators? (200 word maximum) **Note, you do not need to identify specific graduate student collaborators at this point in the process.

Text Response

The graduate student research collaborators will be full partners in the scholarly process. About 1000 artifacts in total were discovered in C65 and C137; 405 are in Michigan, along with hundreds of photographs, plans, and drawings, several maps, and many notebook entries. The GSRAs will conduct research on this material that will be instrumental to accomplishing our collaborative goal of understanding assemblages of artifacts found in structures C65 and C137 at Karanis. They will keep track of the group's progress on a blog allowing all members of the team to respond to findings and questions directly. We foresee that the GSRAs will gain experience in research by working as part of our team, participating in weekly meetings, and working with faculty mentors. Faculty mentors will work with each graduate student researcher to publish discoveries in scholarly journals to enhance their experience and career opportunities. Some of this material may even lead to larger research projects (articles, dissertations) as is common for graduate students in Classical Studies and the Interdepartmental Program in Classical Art and Archaeology.

5. What is the anticipated role of undergraduate students (if any)? (100 word maximum)

Text Response

Undergraduate students will photograph and digitize artifacts and archives in the Kelsey Museum. They will work closely with Encina, Stone, and a GSRA. Verhoogt is currently supervising two UROP students who are researching the history of the papyrus collection in the papers of the initial excavators of Karanis which are located in the Bentley Library. We will seek to hire these UROP students during May and June. During the two-year project, we will also involve undergraduates in many aspects of the Kelsey exhibition, as is the Museum's standard practice.

6. Describe the anticipated outcomes and products of the project. How do you anticipate results be communicated and to what audiences? (200 word maximum)

Text Response

The anticipated outcome is the development of a grant proposal identifying the best ways for our team to conduct collaborative interdisciplinary research on Karanis for a two-year period. We expect that this proposal to have several components, though we have not defined each in detail yet. One component will be a series of articles (written by both faculty and graduate students) or a multi-authored volume on interdisciplinary research on Karanis. These aspects of the project will be directed to scholarly audiences via specialist journals. Another component will be the creation of an exhibition for the Museum about the holistic study of artifact assemblages in one structure at Karanis. This will be geared toward a broad public audience, from schoolchildren to retirees. A final component is a goal we plan to develop for the long term: the creation of the Karanis Research Portal, an online discovery tool containing digitized maps, plans, artifact records, photographs excavation notebooks, and other records in the University's archives. We envision the Research Portal as a tool that could be used by scholars, by students, and by the general public.

7. Briefly describe each faculty member's experience in mentoring graduate students. (300 word maximum)

Text Response

Verhoogt has mentored graduate and undergraduate students in various settings, not only during regular dissertation supervision, but also during individual research projects. He has also mentored undergraduate students during several UROP projects and Honors theses dealing with primary sources. Stone supervised 23 MA and 4 PhD students in a previous position at Florida State University. He was the primary supervisor for 12 of these students, as well as for one undergraduate, who was the sole winner of the University's award for distinguished undergraduate research in 2009. Haug has worked with graduate and undergraduate students in several projects involving the papyrus collection. Their work involves archival and inventory projects, such as scanning and organizing acquisition records from the collection. He is currently overseeing an independent study during which two undergraduate students are compiling a database of geographical information gathered from papyrus texts. Encina has supervised students from a wide range of disciplines at the University of Michigan and other local colleges and universities. They have assisted with exhibitions, research, classes, archives, and database design and entry. Encina has allowed them, and expected them, to take an active role in their education and experience, but with proper oversight to ensure care of collections and information. Motta works on regular basis with (under)graduate students in the archaeobotany lab, training them in the methods and techniques of plant material analysis and mentoring them in their personal research interests. She is currently involved in one Master's thesis, 4 PhD dissertations, and has been the advisor of seven Honors theses. In addition she has been a UROP mentor for more than 15 students.

8. Describe the collaborative process and the work that you anticipate accomplishing during Spring Term. (300 word maximum)

Text Response

During the Spring term the focus will be on identifying the problems and potentialities that will be involved in a collaborative endeavor of this size. We have selected two structures from Karanis (C65 and C137) for study because they represent many of these issues that we want to work on collaboratively. The core research team of faculty and students will study, analyze, and digitize the data from these structures. This process will make clear where the

logistical and developmental problems are that come with bringing together material that is studied in diverse scholarly fields. The full research team will contribute to the analysis and will assist in the composition of a larger grant proposal. The two lines will be brought together during weekly meetings that will discuss the progress and outline and draft the grant proposal that is due July 1. Work will proceed according to the following schedule: - Hire and train student workers - Design database management system for project data - Transcribe, translate, and analyze selected papyri from C65 and C137 - Digitize selected archival photographs from C65 and C137 - Photograph selected artifacts from C65 and C137 - Ensure consistency of records from C65 and C137 in database - Scan selected maps, drawings, and notebooks, about C65 and C137 - Meet on weekly basis with to discuss collaborative project and plan grant application - Determine the most appropriate material for a Kelsey exhibition - Apply for further funding

9. What role will each team member play in the proposal development work? (300 word maximum)

Text Response

The proposal will be developed through a collaborative process. Discussion and exchange of ideas will take place among the core group during weekly meetings, while Verhoogt and Stone will have daily contact with the graduate and undergraduate students Verhoogt will coordinate the activities of the entire research team and make sure that the goals of the proposal outlined above are met. Through feedback from the student research partners, he will structure the weekly meetings. Stone and Encina will coordinate the activities of the Kelsey Museum team (including one GSRA and undergraduate students), and Haug will coordinate the activities of the Papyrology team (including one GSRA and undergraduate student). The faculty members on the full team will be asked to provide input on written reports (including the blog) and specific questions from the students. All specialists will contribute their perspectives on the opportunities for further examination of materials from Karanis relevant to their particular speciality. The information technology representatives will assist the team in ensuring digital objects created are properly prepared for preservation and creating a metadata schema using best practices for linked open data. They will inform us about what they project needs to develop a Karanis Research Portal for scholars and general audiences and how it can leverage existing online resources, such as the Kelsey Museum database and papyrological databanks. Verhoogt and Stone will take the lead in drafting the grant proposal due in July, though the final proposal will represent the collaboration of the full team.

Attach the Completed Budget Form (must be .xls not .pdf) -- Click on "Budget Form" above to download the .xls budget template, complete the form and save for your files. -- Upload the completed form below **Note: Changes cannot be made to the budget after the file is uploaded

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Attach the Completed Proposal Development Chair/Director Signature Support Form (must be .pdf) -- You may obtain some or all of the signatures required on the attached form. We realize it may be onerous to collect signatures from up to 10 persons on a single form; please obtain as many as possible on the form. -- For those that are unable to sign the form, have them send an email of support to collaboratory@umich.edu. --All required signatures must be received via the Signature Support Form or email in order for the application to be reviewed. -- Upload the completed form below. **Note: Changes or additions cannot be made to the signature support form once it has been uploaded.

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