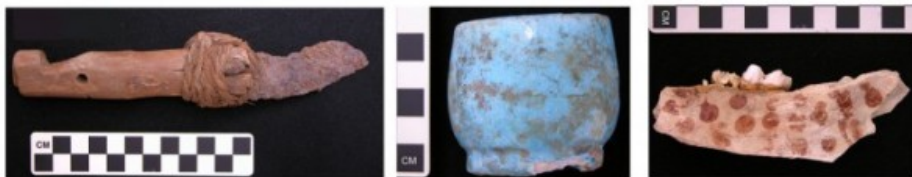


ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION AT THE KELSEY MUSEUM

July 29, 2011 Suzanne Davis Conservation, Day of Archaeology
2011, Museum Archaeology, Science Ann Arbor, Archaeology, Artifact, British Isles, Claudia, Claudia
Chemello, conservation, Conservator, Egypt, Environment, Faience, Karanis, Kelsey Museum, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, Michigan, paint, pottery, Suzanne Davis, the University of Michigan, United Kingdom, University of Michigan, University of Michigan's Kelsey Museum

At the University of Michigan's Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, my colleague Claudia and I provide conservation for the Museum's daily activities as well as for two of its excavations. Today we're working on objects from Karanis, a Graeco-Roman farming town in Egypt, where the University of Michigan excavated in the 1920's.

These objects will be shown in an upcoming exhibition here at the Kelsey Museum, *Karanis Revealed*, and they are currently undergoing conservation.



Two of these objects, the knife and the inkwell (top), will need conservation treatment before they're exhibited. The knife blade, made of iron, has active corrosion that could get worse during the exhibition. The inkwell, made of faience, has cracks and areas where

the surface needs to be stabilized. The painted bone on the lower right just needs extra TLC; low light to protect the paint from fading, and special handling since the paint is powdery and comes off easily when the bone is touched.

The research and examination undertaken by conservators can help archaeologists understand the materials they excavate, but the primary goal of archaeological conservation is to preserve excavated artifacts. It would be sad if something that's survived for 2,000 years fell apart after excavation for lack of care!