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"Papyri from Karanis: The Granary C123"
W. Graham Claytor and Arthur Verhoogt, editors
With the assistance of Paul Heilporn and Samantha Lash.

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PREFACE

Documents from Karanis have been a staple of papyrology since the field's beginnings in the late nineteenth century, and the decade of excavations undertaken by the University of Michigan from 1924 to 1935 further enhanced the town's prominence. This is the fifth volume dedicated to papyri retrieved during those excavations and the fourth Karanis volume under the umbrella of the Michigan Papyri (*P.Mich.*) series.

The volume had its humble beginnings in a graduate seminar led by Verhoogt at the University of Michigan in the winter of 2013. As is usual in such seminars, the students were provided with unpublished texts from the collection to work on as a class project, but Verhoogt decided to focus on papyri from a single structure in order to open discussion about bridging the gap between archaeology and papyrology. At the same time, Samantha Lash's honors thesis was providing an archaeological analysis of granary C123 (the basis for the introduction to this volume), and her participation in the seminar brought a true archaeological voice into the discussion. Little did we know then that C123 was not only the richest structure in terms of papyrus finds (with some individual inventory numbers containing well over 100 fragments) but also one of the most complex structures from an archaeological point of view.

The process leading to this volume has been informative. The archaeological difficulties with the multiple floors of C123 for the site-wide level system assumed by the excavators (difficulties we now know were realized by the excavators themselves, though never addressed by them), in combination with the presence of thousands of papyrus fragments and other archaeological artifacts (few of which have received any scholarly attention at all), made it impossible to arrive at the perfect marriage between archaeology and papyrology for this structure. At the same time, dealing with C123 has brought out many of the challenges and potentialities of dealing with Karanis material. The extensive archival record for C123, with numerous photographs taken during excavation, has facilitated a level of reconstruction that would not have been possible with many other structures. Our dealings with C123 have also opened up avenues of possible research for other structures, for which we recommend multi-disciplinary and collaborative approaches.

That this volume is a collaborative effort is clear from the list of contributors. We also acknowledge the support of many others who contributed in one way or another to the completion of this volume. We are grateful to Brendan Haug in his dual role as archivist of the collection and series editor. Monica Tsuneishi was instrumental in processing our numerous image requests. Conservators Marieka Kaye and Leyla Lau-Lamb (now retired) did wonders on the many smaller and damaged fragments that make up the bulk of C123 papyri. Library photographer Randal Stegmeyer made all the images published in this volume and many more that enabled our study of the C123 papyri. For facilitating our access to the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology and serving as trusty guides to its material, we gratefully acknowledge the support of Terry Wilfong and Sebastian Encina. Susan Alcock read parts of the manuscript, for which we are thankful.

The return of the Michigan Papyri series to the University of Michigan Press would not have happened without the efforts of Ellen Bauerle, whose support we gratefully acknowledge. Finally, we wish to thank referees Nigel Pollard and Maryline Parca (whose identities were revealed to us, with their permission, after the fact) for their careful reading and many detailed comments.

ABBREVIATIONS

Citations of ancient authors and works follow the abbreviations in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, and E. Eidinow, eds., *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th edition (Oxford, 2012), available online at <http://classics.oxfordre.com/page/abbreviation-list/>

Journal abbreviations follow *L'année philologique*, available online at <http://www.annee-philologique.com>

Papyrological editions and congress proceedings follow the abbreviations set out in J. F. Oates, W. H. Willis, et al., *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets*, available at <http://papyri.info/docs/checklist>

Citations of Trismegistos (Depauw and Geldof 2014) follow the recommendations laid out at http://www.trismegistos.org/about_how_to_cite: e.g., TM Geo 297 = <http://www.trismegistos.org/place/297>

LDAB = Leuven Database of Ancient Books, available online at <http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/>

Michigan APIS = Advanced Papyrological Information System of the University of Michigan Papyrology Collection, available online at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis>

M.-P.³ = P. Mertens and R. Pack, *Catalogue of Greek and Latin Literary Papyri*, available online at <http://cipl93.philo.ulg.ac.be/Cedopal/MP3/dbsearch.aspx>

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NOTES FOR THE READER

Bold numbers refer to texts published in this volume.

All dates are CE unless noted otherwise.

Transcription of Greek texts uses the Leiden symbol system:

- [] indicates a lacuna in the original.
 - () indicates the resolution of an abbreviation or symbol.
 - { } indicates a cancellation by the editor of the text.
 - < > indicates an omission by the ancient scribe.
 - [[]] indicates a deletion by the ancient scribe.
 - \ / indicates an interlinear addition.
- Dots under letters (e.g., α̣β̣γ̣) indicate uncertainly read letters.
Plain dots (e.g., . . .) indicate the approximate number of illegible or lost letters.

The *apparatus criticus* records most abbreviations, but the common symbols (e.g., L for ἔτος) are omitted.

Excavation Labels

Michigan excavation labels, such as 30-C123-BBI-A, are read as follows (for more information, see *O.Mich.* I, pp. xviii–xix):

The first number is the season of excavation (e.g., 30 = 1930/31).

The following letter indicates the occupational level to which the structure was assigned by the excavation team. The five levels are distinguished by the letters A–E, with A being the uppermost and newest level and with E being the lowest and oldest.

The following number designates the structure itself. In the case of streets, an S precedes this number (e.g., CS210).

The next letter(s) identify a division of the structure (room, courtyard, staircase, etc.), while a superscript number indicates a subdivision, such as a bin.

The final letter is the number of the “object” in the Record of Objects (listed alphabetically, A–Z, then AI–ZI, AII–ZII, etc.). An “object” can be a very large group, such as 30-C123-BBJ-A, “papyrus,” which consists of P.Mich. inv. 5824–38.

An asterisk (*) denotes either a fill beneath a room/structure or a dump that is not delineated by architectural features.

For the sake of clarity, two examples follow:

1. 30-C123BG⁴-A refers to object A (in the Record of Objects), found in bin 4 in room BG in structure 123, which was assigned to the C level of occupation. This object was excavated in the 1930/31 season.
2. 30-132*-YII refers to object YII (in the Record of Objects), found in locus 132* (in this case, a dump) during the 1930/31 season.

The accentuation of Egyptian names follows the guidelines set forth in Clarysse 1997.

Introduction

This volume explores the complex relationship between papyri and their archaeological context, through a case study of structure C123 in Karanis. The difficulty in understanding this relationship is epitomized by the fact that, as we will establish, C123 functioned, for at least part of its lifespan, as one of the primary granaries of the village, yet few of the many documents found within its walls relate to this function. Instead, we are faced with a mass of largely private papers, many of which can be attributed to two distinct family archives, that of Satabous and family and that of Sabinus and Apollinarius.¹ Whereas E. M. Husselman, the first scholar to give serious consideration to the problem, casually suggested that these papyri belonged to the inhabitants of the structure (perhaps at a stage subsequent to its use as a granary), recent scholarship has underscored the methodological challenges in correlating texts to the occupation of the structures in which they were found, even in modern, more sophisticated excavations.² Further interpretational challenges come from the incomplete publication of the excavations and the methodology and recording practices of the Michigan team. While advanced for the 1920s and 30s, the lack of attention to stratigraphy seriously impedes the dating and interpretation of objects in relation to their find spots. This volume is an attempt to face these challenges and provide a way forward in the study of Karanis as a whole.

This project is nevertheless a product of distinct scholarly agendas and represents an imperfect marriage of archaeological and papyrological inquiry. The papyri published here were selected for use as a class project, on the basis of legibility, completeness, and the interest of their contents, rather than for their potential to illuminate questions of archaeological interest, such as the dating of various stages of the structure's development and eventual abandonment. Certain contexts in the structure, which yielded only small fragmentary texts of little interest on their own, need further study to refine their chronological parameters. With so much papyrological and archaeological data still unpublished, and considering the interpretative challenges stemming from this material, our volume can only hope to further the discussion, rather than to provide a final statement, on C123.

The volume comprises two main sections. The first section is introductory. The present chapter introduces the ancient village of Karanis and gives a history of excavation at the site, with a special focus on the University of Michigan excavations (1924–35) and ongoing attempts to interpret these findings. Until recently, research on Karanis largely proceeded along parallel

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1. Both archives are the subject of ongoing work. For a preliminary overview of the archive of Satabous (TM Arch 407), see Claytor 2013b; for the archive of Sabinus and Apollinarius (TM Arch 116), see Claytor and Feucht 2013. It is important to note that what papyrologists call "archives" are groups of texts purposely collected in antiquity, even if they were subsequently thrown away, as was the case with the two archives from C123. On papyrological definitions of archives, see Van Beek 2007; Vandorpe, Clarysse, and Verreth 2015.
 2. Ast and Davoli 2016; Nevett 2011.

lines, with archaeological and papyrological data discussed and published separately, but the last 25 years have seen a growing awareness of the importance of a contextual approach that assesses all the evidence for individual structures or blocks of structures known as *insulae* (singular *insula*).³ This new approach is still being refined, however, and the earlier assumption that architecture, objects, and individuals can be easily correlated must be replaced with a more nuanced understanding of deposition processes and the limits of the excavation data.⁴

The following chapter focuses on structure C123, beginning with a chronological reconstruction of its excavation over three consecutive seasons. We then examine the larger *insula* of which C123 was a part, arguing that C123 was originally built, in the second half of the first century CE, as a stand-alone granary, with street access on three sides. Later developments in the second century that closed off its western access point may be related to the changing function of the granary and to the beginning of the accumulation of the debris reflected in the archaeological record. We next move into a detailed examination of the structure itself, including some observations on the storage of grain in Roman Egypt. The discussion of the structure typifies many of the challenges of studying the archaeological record of Karanis. From indications in the Record of Objects⁵ and the excavation reports,⁶ we show that the granary underwent a complex, multistage process of modification, reuse, and abandonment, which left behind numerous depositions related to these stages. Probable collapse of the upper vaults of the southern sector further complicates the depositional history of the structure. In the end, we conclude that the vast majority of small finds, including the papyri, are the product of dumping practices rather than occupation debris. From our discussion of C123, it will become clear that the architecture and objects are a palimpsest, a fragmented record of the activities and behaviors of many individuals over many generations.

The third section of this book contains the editions of 37 texts that were found in various rooms inside structure C123,⁷ which gives an indication of the typological and chronological spread of the papyri from C123. Our research has also identified numerous texts that belong to the archive of Satabous and the archive of Sabinus and Apollinarius. These will be published in a future volume of Michigan Papyri, which will give us the opportunity to fully address the new contributions of these texts to the histories of the two families. In this volume, these texts are identified by inventory number.

The text section opens with the first papyrus found in C123, one side of which was used to record a unique community prayer, which was likely performed in the village of Karanis (**827**; the recto contains the account **828**). The remaining texts are grouped according to the room and particular locus of C123 in which they were found (**829–63**). Short overviews of these rooms discuss their architecture and small finds and attempt to reconstruct their depositional histories. This contextual approach illustrates the gradual transformation of the structure and abandonment of the area, as attested by the texts' range of content and dates and their spread throughout different archaeological contexts of C123.

3. T. Gagos provided the impetus for this new approach upon his appointment as archivist in 1991, which led to a graduate seminar on houses B17 and B224, presentations at the annual meetings of the American Society of Papyrologists in 1992 and 1993, and P. van Minnen's 1994 publication on B17 and its surroundings. See Gagos 2001: 524 n. 33.
4. This assumption is most evident in van Minnen 1994 and 1995. The editors of the recently published *P.Cair.Mich. II* largely follow the interpretative framework laid out by van Minnen. For criticism of this approach, see Nevett 2011: 19.
5. The Record of Objects is the year-by-year listing of small finds by excavation locus made by the Michigan excavation team. See the discussion in the text below and Wilfong 2014a: 15–18. The Record of Objects is not published, but an Excel version of it can be requested from the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology.
6. Mentions of "excavation reports" (here and below) refer to a typescript by field director Enoch E. Peterson (referenced herein as the Peterson Typescript) and the published summary of that report, Husselman 1979.
7. Initial transcriptions of most of these texts, apart from **827** and **828**, were made by Claytor in the summer of 2012, and first drafts were produced during a graduate seminar led by Verhoogt at the University of Michigan in the winter semester of 2013.

1.1. History of Karanis

Karanis (modern Kôm Aushîm) was established under Ptolemy II Philadelphus (282–246 BCE) in the northeast corner of Egypt's Fayum region, some 55 kilometers southwest of Memphis. It was one of many towns established as part of a project to further develop the Fayum basin, through the construction of canals, the development of agricultural land, and the creation of new settlements to house the growing population. Karanis became one of the main agricultural centers of the Fayum, peaking in prosperity in the first and second centuries CE and lasting into at least the sixth century. This continuous occupation spanned several periods of dramatic social, religious, economic, and political development throughout the Mediterranean world, from the early years of Ptolemaic control of Egypt to the ascent, expansion, and transformation of the Roman Empire. Karanis was certainly not untouched by the radical changes of the larger world in which it existed, but it maintained a relatively consistent role as a producer of grain and, to a lesser extent, olive oil, for the larger states of which it was part.

Karanis was a bustling agricultural village of some 3,500 inhabitants in the first and second centuries CE, covering over 60 hectares at its peak. Sitting on a modest rise (*kôm* in Arabic) above the surrounding fields and canals, the old town would have presented a dense arrangement of multistory mud-brick homes, punctuated by the village's two main temples. Nonresidential structures were few: besides the two large temples and smaller shrines, the town included a number of granaries and a few baths, although other public buildings may have been lost in the center of the site, which was destroyed by the extraction of *sebakh* before the Michigan excavations commenced. To the east and west of the *kôm* spread the suburbs of the village, and on a desert ridge to the northwest lay the village's necropolis. The extensive agricultural zone to the south, divided into individual plots and cut by feeder canals, was known, at least for official purposes, as the "plain of Karanis," where most of the villagers would have worked during the day. The large Canal of Patsontis cut through the landscape just south of the *kôm*, bringing the Nile water that sustained the village.

Karanis was the main node of a small network of subsidiary settlements⁸ and shared links with the other large villages of the northern rim of the Fayum basin, such as Soknopaiou Nesos, Bakchias, and Philadelphia. To the south, on the central ridge of the basin, lay the nome capital Arsinoe, and Karanis was connected to other urban centers more distant, such as Memphis, Antinoopolis (after its foundation in 130), and even the provincial capital Alexandria. Like most ancient settlements, Karanis' economy was based on agriculture, and the village shared with most of the rest of Egypt a dependence on the annual inundation of the Nile River; its fields were fed by a canal now called the Bahr Yusef, which branched off from the Nile far south of the Fayum. Like those of other large villages in the province, the many granaries of Karanis served as local collection points for tax grain, before transshipment down the Nile to Alexandria and beyond. In a broad sense, this agricultural village—with relatively moderate levels of social and economic differentiation and important links to a regional urban center—fits the profile of many large villages in the Roman Empire. Its vast record of archaeological and papyrological evidence thus makes Karanis fundamental for studying village life during this period.

Extant evidence does not allow us a detailed look at Ptolemaic Karanis: Trismegistos lists only 86 documents, mostly short ostraca, from the fourth through first centuries BCE, along with a handful of papyri⁹ and four important inscriptions, including two dedications of the South Temple. The excavators, moreover, did not identify any structures earlier than the first

8. The main settlements around Karanis are Kerkesoucha, Ptolemais Nea, Hiera Severou, Stratonos, Psenarpsenesis, and Patsontis. For these villages and their relationship to Karanis, see Geremek 1969: 15–24; Derda 2006: 157–59.

9. There are pockets of unpublished Ptolemaic texts from Karanis in the Michigan collection, such as those under P.Mich. inv. 5378 and 5380 from house B163 and those under P.Mich. inv. 5737 and 5739 from house C137.

century BCE. Isolated clues suggest that Karanis may have been an important regional village already in the third century BCE. In 218 BCE, the village economy was already diverse enough to support a doctor (*P.Entreux*. 69), and military settlers played an important role in early Karanis, as evidenced by *I.Fay*. I 83 (155/154 BCE), a dedication made by soldiers and their commanders. The evidence necessary for constructing a social history of Karanis does not appear until the advent of Roman rule, however, and we are therefore largely unable to analyze the effects of regime change in this village.¹⁰

The wealth of evidence for Roman Karanis¹¹ aligns with the chronological spread of papyrological documentation in Egypt generally. The rise in preserved papyri during the century from Octavian's victory to Vespasian's is only a prelude to the mass of evidence from the Flavian period straight through to the Severan. The peak of documentation in Karanis comes in the second century CE, as is the case for the rest of Egypt.¹² Nearly all of the identified Karanis archives date from the Roman period,¹³ and the most informative ones center around veterans and their families, even though they were a small minority of the population. A fortunate corrective to this bias is the Satabous family archive, which will be further studied in a future *P.Mich.* volume that will take into account the newly identified texts.

The abandonment of the site is still an open question. Until recently, the prevailing view held that Karanis was a dying village in the fourth century CE and was abandoned in the fifth.¹⁴ The first challenge to this view came in 1984, when D. M. Bailey observed that scholars were down-dating objects from the site to fit the chronological framework established by the excavators.¹⁵ N. Pollard expanded on these observations, making a clear and convincing case for occupation into the sixth century.¹⁶ The ongoing excavations under the auspices of the URU Fayum Project¹⁷ are providing more evidence in this direction.¹⁸

1.2. Archaeological Activity at Karanis

The first documented encounter with the archaeological remains of Kōm Aushīm is Egyptologist Flinders Petrie's visit in 1890.¹⁹ His brief report focuses almost entirely on the stone weights he found on the surface, but he described the site as "a great town, the most important of all the district," with a tall and extensive "accumulation of ruins."²⁰ The ancient settlement and surrounding area had already attracted the attention of others. Petrie notes that a number of tombs to the north "had just been looted before I went there," and papyri from the site were already reaching European collections. For instance, Heinrich Brugsch's 1891 purchase of some 3,000 papyri in the Fayum included a number from Karanis.²¹ In 1895/96, an expedition financed by

10. For an analysis of the change from Ptolemaic to Roman rule in Egypt, see Monson 2012. The late Ptolemaic and early Roman ostraka from Karanis have provided a window into taxation reforms in this period: see Monson 2014a, 2014b.

11. For accounts of Karanis in the Roman period, see Geremek 1969; Alston 1995: 117–42; Gazda and Wilfong 2004.

12. Delattre and Heilporn 2014: 317–18.

13. One exception is the ostrakon archive of Inaros (not yet in TM), consisting of late-Ptolemaic receipts for *sitonion* and *epi-statikon*, all found in 30-B199K* (*O.Mich.* II 716–26, 741, 765, and maybe 767 [found in same locus, but issued to another person]). Cf. Monson 2014b: 212–13.

14. This view was established by the excavators: see Boak and Peterson 1931: 5; Husselman 1979: 29. For further historiography, see Pollard 1998: 147–48.

15. Bailey 1984: 185–87.

16. Pollard 1998.

17. For a project description and for the institutions involved, see <http://www.archbase.com/fayum/project.htm>. For published reports, see Cappers et al. 2013 and Barnard et al. 2015.

18. The late Roman amphorae, for example, are discussed in Gupta-Agarwal 2011.

19. For a detailed history of archaeological activity at Karanis, see Davoli 1998: 73–116.

20. Petrie 1891: 32, Kom Wezim.

21. On this purchase, see Rebenich and Franke 2012: 502 n. 1579. Brugsch sold the lot to the Königliche (now Staatliche)



Fig. 1. *Sebakh* extraction by railway during the 1926/27 season. (Kelsey Museum neg. no. 5.2465.)

the Egypt Exploration Fund and led by B. P. Grenfell, D. G. Hogarth, and A. S. Hunt, worked on the South Temple, some domestic structures, and the looted necropolis north of the site.²² Grenfell and Hunt briefly returned in 1900, but without great enthusiasm or success.²³

More destructive to the ancient site than the probes of archaeologists and individual looters was the local extraction of *sebakh*, decomposed organic material, such as ancient mud brick, which was used for agricultural fertilizer and fuel.²⁴ At Karanis, an Italian company, the Daira-Agnelli, built a railway system capable of extracting 200 cubic meters of *sebakh* per day, to satisfy the commercial needs of local agriculture (fig. 1).²⁵ The damage from this commercial *sebakh* extraction was devastating, stripping the center of the village to bedrock by 1924, when archaeologists from the University of Michigan began excavation at the site. The loss of this central area prevents us from determining whether Karanis had a main public *agora*, as Grenfell and Hunt thought,²⁶ or a *dromos* connecting the two large temples in the north and south of the village.²⁷

The University of Michigan conducted excavations between 1924 and 1935 (discussed in the next section of this chapter), after which the site was largely abandoned until the late 1960s. An exception was the unauthorized activity of Sir Miles Lampson, Britain's ambassador to Egypt and Sudan from 1936 to 1946, who occupied the old Michigan excavation house as a weekend retreat and decided to "poke about" the ruins as a diversion, which became an embarrassment to antiquities officials when his activities reached the Egyptian press in 1937.²⁸ Proper excavation did not resume until 1968, when a Cairo University mission under the direction of Abd el-Latif

Museen zu Berlin; a search in the Berlin Papyrus Database (BerlPap) for "Brugsch" under "acquisition" (*Erwerbung*), with "Karanis" as the "provenance" (*Herkunft*) returns 91 papyri, most of which were published in *BGU I*.

22. Hogarth and Grenfell 1895–96: 16. Cf. *P.Fay.*, pp. 27–35; Davoli 1998: 74–76.

23. Grenfell and Hunt 1900–1901.

24. Bailey 1999.

25. Wilburn 2012: 277.

26. *P.Fay.*, p. 27.

27. Davoli 1998: 79.

28. The story is told in Reid 2015: 285–88.

worked on the western edge of the site and near the North Temple.²⁹ In 1972, the team from Cairo University was joined by one from the Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO), and the teams excavated together for three further seasons (1972–75) in the northern sector of the village. The publication of these excavations focused on a decorated bathhouse, which was later restored by the IFAO.³⁰

Fresh study commenced in 2005, under the auspices of the URU Fayum Project. Preliminary work in the 2005–8 seasons focused on the assessment of the current state of the site through a comprehensive mapping of architectural surface remains.³¹ A three-dimensional virtual model has been created based on this work, and in 2010, a three-dimensional scanning project expanded to include the area of the Michigan and Cairo University excavations.³² Further magnetic and field surveys in conjunction with test excavations have been undertaken to determine the extent of the site and its degree of degradation and to understand the associated necropolis.³³ The main thrust of the project focuses on the northeastern part of the Fayum as an agricultural landscape and on the role of agriculture in the economy of the region and at each site itself.

Since 2008, the excavations have focused on one of the eastern neighborhoods and have included a rigorous archaeobotanical and zooarchaeological collection strategy in addition to the inventory of objects. These excavations have provided corroboration for continued habitation at the site of Karanis until at least the sixth century.³⁴ Particularly important is the attention paid to the study of the use, reuse, and deposition of material culture, which holds major implications for furthering our understanding of the Michigan records and collections. Furthermore, excavation has revealed a granary dating to the fourth to sixth centuries. Preliminary reports already indicate similarities between this new structure and C123, including a complex building sequence indicative of reuse, remodeling, and adaption, as well as more specific details like access routes, high vaulted chambers subdivided into bins by short cross walls, and subterranean bins.³⁵ A particularly interesting point of divergence is that the newly excavated granary appears to have been appropriated and expanded for such a function in later remodeling, whereas C123 was a purpose-built granary that was subsequently remodeled to accommodate other needs. The ongoing excavations promise to provide important contextual information for further study of Michigan's excavations.

1.3. The University of Michigan Excavations

The University of Michigan excavations of Karanis from 1924 to 1935 were a work in progress.³⁶ Especially in the early seasons, the outside pressure of *sebakh* extraction³⁷ and the team's lack of preparation for the amount and variety of finds led to a rather ad hoc approach to record keeping. Interpretations of the site as a whole, including the designation of levels (discussed below), changed as the excavations progressed. Additionally, a final report and interpretation of the site by the Michigan team was never published.³⁸ What remains for scholars today is a site with

29. Bietak 1970; Davoli 1998: 87–89.

30. Wagner and El-Nassery 1975; Castel 2009; Cappers et al. 2013: 39. This bathhouse can now be toured virtually at <http://www.karanisbath.com/>

31. Cappers et al. 2013: 39.

32. Wendrich et al. 2006.

33. Buzi 2004, 2006; Cappers et al. 2013. See the project website at http://www.archbase.com/fayum/greco_karanis.htm

34. Barnard et al. 2015.

35. Cappers et al. 2013: 44.

36. Davoli 1998: 76–87.

37. See Wilfong 2012: 225.

38. Object studies of Karanis material include, e.g., Haatvedt and Peterson 1964 (coins), Harden 1936 (glass), B. Johnson 1981 (pottery), Shier 1978 (terracotta lamps), Gates-Foster 2014 (clay seals), T. K. Thomas 2001 (textiles), and a number of publications of papyri and ostraka from Karanis (*P.Mich.* VI, VIII, and IX; *O.Mich.* I–IV).

potential that needs careful analysis and (re)interpretation of the excavators' assumptions on a house-by-house basis. Archival material (maps, plans, reports, letters, photos, etc.) in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology and the Bentley Historical Library of the University of Michigan are the key tools in this reinterpretation of the site.

Nonetheless, the systematic study of Karanis by the University of Michigan was groundbreaking in archaeological method and documentation, the retrieval of artifacts, and their subsequent display in public and educational forums. Michigan professor Francis Kelsey was the main proponent of the excavations. His vision was to uncover archaeological evidence relevant to the interpretation of papyri and other textual material. Although Kelsey spent only a few days in the field at Karanis, he carefully selected his team (including field director Enoch E. Peterson),³⁹ which would carry out excavations in line with his holistic approach to the ancient world. In Karanis, "the advantages of studying archaeology and papyrology together were first realized."⁴⁰

The excavations were organized according to the site's architecture, with the creation of numerous maps and plans to show the excavated area, structures, roads, and open spaces. All finds, including papyri, were associated with this architecture in the Record of Objects, which the excavators updated each season.⁴¹ Occasional notes in the Record of Objects offer more precise locations of finds within an architectural unit (e.g., "below floor level" or "in a bin"), sometimes providing useful (but vague) stratigraphic information that can help us understand the excavators' methodology. Such notes are mostly made for papyri and coins, which reflects the excavators' belief that these objects held the key to dating the structures in which they were found.

While the architecture and small finds of Karanis were well documented, the excavators' conception of stratigraphy was rudimentary.⁴² They created a site-wide scheme of occupation layers, with the earliest excavated layers labeled E and D (late first century BCE to early first century CE) and with the latest labeled A (late third to mid-fifth centuries CE). Each excavated structure was assigned to one of these layers based on the datable remains found therein, primarily coins and papyri. One problem with this "architectural stratigraphy" is that it does not account for the various processes by which archaeological objects can end up in a structure. Not every object found in a structure can be associated with its latest occupation, because objects can also end up in a structure after its inhabitants have abandoned the structure.⁴³ Another problem is that coins and papyri are not the most helpful in dating archaeological levels. Pottery is a much more secure way to help date stratigraphic levels in excavations, and the study of pottery from Karanis is only now beginning.⁴⁴

Very little remains of the oldest architectural levels of Karanis, levels E and D. The earliest settlement, in the early Ptolemaic period representing level E, was situated near the canal and appears to have been focused around the South Temple.⁴⁵ The construction of the North Temple, the renovation of the South Temple, and the expansion of the housing district by several new *insulae* that retained their outline in successive levels are dated by Husselman roughly to the late first century BCE and the early first century CE, the early Roman period. The bulk of these levels occupies the space between the temples and was almost completely destroyed during the *sebakh* extraction.

The C level of Karanis (mid-first to early second centuries CE) corresponds to a long peri-

39. J. L. Starkey of the University of Michigan was the director for the first two seasons (1924/25 and 1925/26).

40. Pedley 2012: 2.

41. See above, n. 5.

42. See Landvatter 2014 for an overview.

43. For a good introduction to the various occupation phases of buildings, see LaMotta and Schiffer 1999.

44. Landvatter, forthcoming.

45. Husselman 1979: 9.

od of uninterrupted occupation of the same locations, which witnessed constant remodeling, including interior renovations of both residential and commercial buildings, the modification of preexisting infrastructure, and changes in floor and courtyard height.⁴⁶ The C level also represents the expansion of the town to the north, east, and west that began in the mid-first century CE and continued through the first half of the second century CE. There was a substantial amount of reconstruction of structures in the town as the occupation level rose and as buildings were partially abandoned and reoccupied. It appears that much of this renovation was restricted to the interior of buildings, although some areas experienced more discontinuity in structure usage and exhibit substantial changes in street and house plans.

In the B level (mid-second to late third centuries CE), the excavators identified structures from the C level that continued to be occupied and modified, as well as the addition of new features built directly on top (and incorporating) C-level structures. A substantial rise in the occupation level due to the accumulation of natural debris and windblown sand allowed the excavators to distinguish between C-level and B-level modifications. However, recent reinterpretation of a number of structures has shown that attribution to levels C and B was often only done by the excavators retroactively, after they had completely cleared the structure, leaving finds assigned to one level or the other rather arbitrarily.⁴⁷

The A level (late third to mid-fifth centuries CE) is the top level of Karanis. As such, it is much damaged by wind and the activities of *sebakhin* (*sebahk*-diggers). It was defined by what Husselman terms "a complete break" with lower levels: "top level houses and streets were on an average close to 3 m. above those of the B level."⁴⁸

With this background, let us now turn, in the next chapter, to the structure that is central to this volume, C123.

46. Husselman 1952: 59.

47. Stephan and Verhoogt 2005; Landvatter 2016.

48. Husselman 1979: 26.