



Archives and Special Collections Department,  
American University of Beirut  
Beirut, Lebanon  
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## **Karanis-Fayum Excavations Photo Album of The University of Michigan, 1924-1935**

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the University Libraries, AUB  
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## Descriptive Summary

**Call No.:** Ph:KF:1924-1935

**Library Catalog ID:** [b26036538](#)

**Record Creator:** I. Terentieff, a surveyor

**Collection Title:** Karanis-Fayum Excavations Photo Album, 1924-1935

**Collection Dates:** 1924-1935

**Physical Description:** 1 album (99 albumen prints). Sizes range between 18 x 24 cm and 7 x 10 cm

**Language(s):** English.

## Administrative Information

**Source:** N/A

**Access Restrictions:** The collection can be accessed within the premises of the Archives and Special Collections Department, Jafet Memorial Library, American University of Beirut.

**Photocopying Restriction:** No photocopying restriction except for fragile material.

**Preferred Citation:** Karanis-Fayum Excavations Photo Album, 1924-1935, Ph: KF:1924-1935. Drawer no., Album no., Photo no., American University of Beirut/Library Archives.

## Scope and Content

Karanis-Fayum Excavations Photo Collection (1924-1935) consists of 1 album comprising 99 albumen prints photographs of landmarks in Karanis-Fayum; a Roman period town site in the Fayum region, Egypt.

The excavation started in 1924. The professor of Latin at the University of Michigan Francis W. Kelsey was able to secure funding from the University president Marion Leroy Burton to create the Near Eastern Research Fund for explorations in Africa and Asia.

The University of Michigan Expedition to Karanis included a number of women: Mrs. L. Amundsen, Joy Fletcher-Allen, Mrs. J. L. Starkey, and Mrs. S. Yeivin. The expedition employed many Egyptians men and women from nearby villages for archaeological digging, camp maintenance, and clearance work on site, repairing the Canal, as well as in the Michigan expedition house.

The Michigan team investigated many structures throughout the town, including those they identified as soldiers' barracks, granaries, baths, houses, temples, and pottery workshops.

The photo collection depicts the rural life in Fayum-Egypt, some excavations, along with the University of Michigan expedition group. Some of the photos show Mrs. Elinor Mullett Husselman, Mr. Enoch E. Peterson, director of the Karanis excavation, and the expedition pets Plupy and Gyp.

The photographer was I. Terentieff the surveyor of the expedition, but the album is undated. Information was obtained from the expedition of the University of Michigan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Women and Gender in Ancient Egypt \(umich.edu\)](#)<sup>1</sup>

## Historical Sketch

Karanis or Kom Aushim was a town in Egypt's Fayum region, founded around 250 BC to house a population meant to work on a newly reclaimed agricultural land. It had a farming community with a diverse population and a complex material culture that lasted for hundreds of years after its foundation. Ultimately abandoned by its inhabitants and partly covered by the encroaching desert, Karanis eventually proved to be an extraordinarily rich archaeological site, yielding thousands of artifacts and texts on papyrus that provide a wealth of information about daily life in the Roman period Egyptian town. "The University of Michigan excavation at Karanis began as part of a larger endeavor to understand the Classical world and became the first of Michigan's ongoing archaeological fieldwork projects in Egypt. Francis W. Kelsey (1858–1927), University of Michigan Professor of Latin, started field projects at a number of sites around the Mediterranean.

In 1923, Professor Kelsey was able to secure funding from University of Michigan president Marion Leroy Burton to create the Near Eastern Research Fund for explorations in Africa and Asia. From the \$50,000 fund, \$15,000 was budgeted for excavation and exploration in Egypt these funds laid the foundation for Michigan's excavations at Karanis, which would eventually become the cornerstone of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology's collection."<sup>2</sup>

The University of Michigan expedition excavated the site at Karanis between 1924 and 1935, and discovered hundreds of structures and thousands of artifacts that showed a complex material culture. The Egyptian government granted, nearly 45,000, relics discovered at the site to the University of Michigan.

Along with extensive archival records and photographs of the excavation, the Karanis material forms one of the salient collections of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of Michigan.

The album at the Library Archives gives a glimpse about this excavation, but it would be interesting to know how this album landed among the AUB collections.

## Subject Headings

Civilization, Greco-Roman.

Karanis (Extinct city).

Egypt -- Antiquities, Roman.

Excavations (Archaeology) -- Egypt -- Karanis (Extinct city).

Temples -- Egypt -- History.

Egypt -- History -- 30 B.C.-640 A.D.

University of Michigan, Library.

Archaeology -- Middle East.

Antiquities -- Middle East.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/kelsey-assets/kelsey-publications/pdfs/karanis-revealed.pdf>

## Formats

Albumen prints -- 1920-1940.

Photograph albums -- 1920-1940.

## Collection Inventory

Photograph album, 1924-1935

- Archaeological sites (33 photos)
- University of Michigan Expedition members, for group photos (7 photos)
- University of Michigan Expedition members, Portrait Photos (6 photos)
- American excavator (5 photos)
- Local Egyptian workers (28 photos)
- Village homes (4 photos)
- A boat (2 photos)
- Camels (1 Photo)
- Expedition pets Plupy and Gyp. (1 photo)
- Topographical Map (1 Photo)
- The Canal (4 Photos)
- Camp house at Kom Aushim (Karanis) (7 Photos)

## Related Materials

### Books

- Arthur E. R. Boak (1933). *Karanis, the temples, coin hoards, botanical and zoological reports, seasons 1924-31*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. [J 913.31:B66k](#)
- Harden, D. B. (1936). *Roman glass from Karanis found by the University of Michigan Archaeological Expedition in Egypt, 1924-29*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. [J 784:H25r](#)
- Boak, Arthur E.R., Chayyim Youtie, Herbert. (1960). *The archive of Aurelius Isidorus in the Egyptian Museum*. Cairo and the University of Michigan (P. Cair. Isidor.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. [J 481.7:B662a](#)
- Shier, L. A. (1978). *Terracotta lamps from Karanis, Egypt: excavations of the University of Michigan*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. [J 738.383:S555t](#)
- Husselman, E. M. (1979). *Karanis excavations of the University of Michigan in Egypt, 1928-1935: topography and architecture: a summary of the reports of the director, Enoch E. Peterson*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. [J 962.2:H972k](#)
- Johnson, B. (1981). *Pottery from Karanis: excavations of the University of Michigan*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. [J 932:J66p](#)
- Alston, R. (1995). *Soldier and society in Roman Egypt: a social history*. London: Routledge. [J 355.099:A464s](#)
- Gazda, E., Wilfong, T.G. (2004). *Karanis, an Egyptian town in Roman times: discoveries of the University of Michigan expedition to Egypt (1924-1935)*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Kelsey Museum of Archeology, University of Michigan, 2004. [J 932:K181g2](#)

- Christiansen, E. (2004). *Coinage in Roman Egypt: the hoard evidence*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press. [J 737.4932:C555c](#)

### **Digital Materials**

- In Wilfong, T. G., & In Ferrara, A. W. S. (2014). [\*Karanis revealed: Discovering the past and present of a Michigan excavation in Egypt\*](#).
- [\*History of the University of Michigan Kelsey Museum\*](#), The University of Michigan, an Encyclopedic Survey ... Wilfred B. Shaw, editor. Pages 1455 - 1476.

### **Photographs**

- Asia Minor Photograph Collection, 1884-1887. [Ph:AM:1884-1887](#)
- Near East Archaeological sites by the American Exploring Party
- Qatar Petroleum Company Photographs, 1980s-1960s. [Ph:QPC:1950s-1960s](#)