

Ellen L. Kohler papers

1159

Finding aid prepared by James DeWalt.

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University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

2014

Table of Contents

Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	5
Administrative Information.....	5
Related Materials	5
Controlled Access Headings.....	6
Collection Inventory.....	7
Correspondence.....	7
Publications.....	8
Teaching Materials.....	8
Personal.....	9
Photographs.....	9

Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	Kohler, Ellen L., 1916-2008
Title	Ellen L. Kohler papers
Call number	1159
Date [inclusive]	1930-2006
Extent	1 linear foot
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Ellen L. Kohler (1916-2008) taught classical archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania (Roman and Etruscan) from 1958 until 1980. Her early field work included excavations at Kourion, Cyprus (1949, 1951, 1955) and at Sybaris (1962), but her principal work was at Gordion, Turkey, where she assisted project director Rodney Young and later Keith DeVries during 18 seasons variously between 1950 and 1982, and in 1992. Her research interests included early Phrygian animal-style carvings in wood and ivory, but she later worked almost exclusively with the inventory of 6th to 7th century Gordion tumulus burial objects. Her principal report, <i>The Lesser Phrygian Tumuli, Part 1</i>, was published in 1995. Dr. Kohler also served as Assistant Curator of the Mediterranean Section of the University Museum from 1958 to 1965, Registrar from 1965 to 1977, and Research Associate from 1968 until her death in 2008. She also served as Executive Editor of <i>Gordion Publications</i> from 1977 to 1987, and as Archivist of the Gordion Project Archives at the University Museum from 1987 to 2005.</p>

Cite as:

[Item name]. Box [Box number]. Ellen L Kohler papers. Penn Museum Archives. Accessed [Date accessed].

Biography/History

Ellen Lucile Kohler (1916-2008) was born at Sunnyside (suburban Seattle) Washington. She received her B.A. (1938) and her M.A. (1942) both in Latin from the University of Washington, and taught high school Latin and history from 1939 to 1942, after which she served as a Latin instructor at the University of Washington from 1942 to 1946. During this time she also spent a season (1939) as an excavator at Cattle Point, San Juan Island, Washington, a former hunting site of the local Salish people. It was here that Dr. Kohler acquired her lifelong love and interest in archaeology. She attended Bryn Mawr College from 1946 to 1948, and the American School of Classical Studies in Athens from 1948 to 1950. During her years at Bryn Mawr she also served as Assistant to the Editor of the *American Journal of Archaeology*. She earned her Ph.D. in archaeology from Bryn Mawr in 1958 with her dissertation *Phrygian Animal Style in Wood and Ivory at Gordion in the 8th to 6th Centuries B.C.*, a topic which she would later return to in her field and lecture work. In 1950 Dr. Kohler began her association with the University of Pennsylvania Museum as an Assistant in the Mediterranean Section. She took part in excavations at Kourion, Cyprus (1949, 1951, 1955) and later at Sybaris in southern Italy (1962), both projects of the University Museum, but it was at the Anatolian site of Gordion, directed since 1950 by Rodney S. Young, that Dr. Kohler did her most significant work. She was part of the original team of the project, and returned over 18 seasons variously from 1950 to 1992. Her area of study included Phrygian animal-style carving in wood and ivory, but she served during most of her career at Gordion to inventory and catalog finds, especially from the lesser tumulus burial mounds surrounding the site, developing a registration and conservation system adapted from the Athenian Agora excavations. She continued this inventory work at the University Museum, serving as Archivist of the Gordion Project Archives from 1987 to 2005. She described herself as principally in charge of the "old" archives, from 1950 through 1974, the year of Director Rodney Young's death. Dr. Kohler also served as Executive Director of Gordion Publications from 1977 to 1987, but she was always actively involved in the publication of Gordion research, having served as Editor of *University Museum Publications* from 1952 to 1958. She also served as editor of *The Gordion Excavations Final Reports: Three Great Early Tumuli* (1981); her most important personal contribution was the publication of *The Lesser Phrygian Tumuli, Part 1*, (1995). (A second volume in this series is forthcoming as of 2013.) In addition, she was also an active reviewer and journal contributor. Although Dr. Kohler served at the University Museum in several capacities since 1950, it was not until 1958 that she became Assistant Curator of the Mediterranean Section, and later Registrar of the Museum from 1965 to 1977. She was appointed Research Associate of the Mediterranean Section in 1968, a position which she continued to hold until her death in 2008. Despite failing eyesight, she continued to perform her duties at the Museum until several months before her death, responding to research inquiries of scholars and fulfilling requests from the Gordion Project Archives. Dr. Kohler taught classical archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania, first as Assistant Professor (1958-1965) and then

as Lecturer (1965-1980). Her principal subject fields were Roman, Italic and Etruscan art and archaeology. During her career Dr. Kohler saw many of her students develop into archaeologists of the first importance, including Crawford H. Greenewald and Charles K. Williams, III.

Scope and Contents

The textual and photographic records of the Ellen L. Kohler papers consist of approximately one linear foot of professional and personal correspondence, including museum research, draft reviews for publication, student papers and academic records, and teaching materials, as well as personal photographs, including some from the Gordion excavation site. They do not include the bulk of Dr. Kohler's papers and records from the Gordion Project (1950-2006), which are held separately in the Gordion Project Archives. Also included here are Dr. Kohler's travel notes and drawings from Greece and Crete in 1948, passports (1948-1985) and personal diaries from 1948-1952, and 1954-1958. The diaries consist for the most part of very brief daily entries, both personal and professional, including references to work at Gordion and the Gordion Project. Included are two files that document Dr. Kohler's support of her alma mater, the University of Washington, and her contribution toward the creation of the Densmore Memorial Fund at this institution.

Administrative Information

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Use Restrictions

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Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

See also Gordion Project records.

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Diaries
- Drawings (visual works)
- Faculty papers
- Photographs
- Travel photography

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- Kourion (Extinct city)

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Kohler, Ellen L., 1916-2008

SUBJECT(S)

- Classical Architecture

Collection Inventory

CORRESPONDENCE, 1945-2006 (BULK, 1958-2006) .

Scope and Contents note

This series includes general professional correspondence, as well as responses to museum research requests (1958-1986) and correspondence and related documentation concerning Dr. Kohler's student and academic career (1930-2006). There are two files relating to her personal support for the University of Washington and the creation of the Densmore Memorial Fund at this institution.

	Box
General Professional 1959-1995.	1
General Professional - Greenewalt, Crawford H. 1960-1990.	1
General Professional - Mellink, Machteld 1963-1974.	1
General Professional - Zancani, Montero 1967-1971.	1
Museum Research 1958-1986 (1 of 2).	1
Museum Research 1958-1986 (2 of 2).	1
Museum Research-Latin Inscription 1981.	1
Academic Career 1930-2006.	1
University of Washington-Contributions and Support 1977-2006.	1
University of Washington-Densmore Memorial Fund 1977-2003.	1

PUBLICATIONS, 1942-1995.

Scope and Contents note

This series includes draft reviews and articles for publication, as well as copies of some of Dr. Kohler's student papers and her master's thesis.

	Box
Book Reviews and Articles 1961-1995.	1
Student Papers 1944-1948 (1 of 2).	1
Student Papers 1944-1948 (2 of 2).	1
Masters Thesis 1942.	1

TEACHING MATERIALS, 1958-1995.

Scope and Contents note

Included are some representative lecture notes and plans for courses in classical archaeology (Roman and Etruscan) that Dr. Kohler taught between 1958 and 1980. Several files of mostly correspondence related to student advising make up the bulk of the series.

	Box
Classical Archaeology-Lecture Notes and Plans 1958-1980.	2
Student Advising (Correspondence) 1959-1995.	2
Student Advising-Carpenter, Carol Ward 1965-1976.	2
Student Advising-Ennis, Lynn 1973-1976.	2
Student Advising-Gualtieri, Maurizio 1974-1978.	2

Student Advising-Hemphill, Pamela 1965-1969.	2
Student Advising-Peppers, Jeanne Marty 1972-1980.	2
Student Advising-Simon, Marilyn L. 1973-1988.	2
Student Advising-Vinson, Sterling Peter 1968-1994.	2

PERSONAL, 1948-1985.

Scope and Contents note

This series includes personal travel notes and drawings from Greece and Crete (1948), eight passports issued between 1948 and 1985, as well as two diaries (1948-1952, and 1954-1959). The diaries consist mostly of brief entries of a personal nature, but include some details of daily activities at excavation sites, including Gordion.

	Box
Travel Notes and Drawings-Greece and Crete 1948.	2
Passports 1948-1985.	2
Diaries 1948-1952, 1954-1958.	2

PHOTOGRAPHS, 1926-1989.

Scope and Contents note

This series contains personal photographs taken of and by Ellen Kohler documenting her childhood, family, academic and professional career. Included are some mostly informal photographs from the

Gordion excavation including team members and local people at the site. Additional photographs of Ellen Kohler can be found in the Portrait Collection (Kohler, Ellen), Penn Museum Archives.

	Box
Portraits, Self 1926-1989.	2
Parents, George and Martha Koehler/Kohler.	2
University of Washington 1934-1940.	2
Bryn Mawr 1946-1948, 1958.	2
Excavations-Kourion, Sybaris 1949-1962.	2
Travel-Eastern Mediterranean 1949.	2
Excavations-Gordion Team Members 1950.	2
Excavations-Gordion Workers 1950.	2
Excavations-Gordion Local People 1950.	2