

# RD Milns Antiquities Museum Annual Report 2023



## Introduction

In 2023, the Museum continued to grow and develop its regular program of exhibitions, events, and student experiences, alongside some new and developed programs.

Guided by our 2022-25 Strategic Plan and the Museum's Student Experiences Strategy, 2023 was a successful year for the Museum's student-centred programs. The Museum continued to deliver student social and academic skills events with increasingly positive attendance and reviews, alongside delivering our collection to UQ classes through tours and hands-on sessions.

The Museum offered 10 Student Experience opportunities to current UQ students through the roles of Student Volunteer, Museum Assistant, Winter Research Scholar, exhibition Research Assistant, and Museum Intern. This unprecedented number of student opportunities is testament to the Museum's long-standing tradition of providing professional opportunities for UQ students to gain experience in the museum sector alongside their formal studies, and is supported by our community of visionary donors.

In 2023, the Museum had a significant focus on exhibition and curatorial work and saw the launching of three new exhibitions throughout the year: *Greece, Rome, Byzantium: Empires of the Sea*, *Intaglios: Imprints of Identity*, and *The Honesty of Ancient Lamps*.

The Museum saw a strong increase in visitation and community engagement throughout the year, with our total visitation increasing 58% from 2022.

The Museum's team also saw changes in 2023: Brianna Sands was appointed Assistant Curator and Oskar Fletcher was appointed Engagement Officer to oversee the Museum's Education Programs.

Thanks as always to our staff, volunteers, students and community of donors and supporters who make the work we do possible.

### 2023 at a Glance

6957 Total Visitors	51 Schools
3223 Walk-in Visitors	1064 School Students
1831 UQ Students	88 Teachers
13 UQ Courses	

## Teaching Activities

The Museum plays an important role in bringing material culture of the ancient world into the classroom for UQ students at all levels. Student access to our collection during undergraduate and postgraduate classes is central to the Museum's mission of connecting students with the past.

In 2023, the Museum provided 80 hours of course content to UQ classes. Supported by our expert staff, these sessions allowed over 750 students to connect with the Museum collection, often over multiple tutorial sessions each semester, representing over 1650 individual student interactions with the Museum collection. These classes included:

- ANCH1240: Rise of Greece (1 tutorial, 212 students)
- ANCH1250: Rise of Ancient Rome (1 tutorial, 171 students)
- ANCH2030: Myth, Magic and Religion (5 tutorials, 102 students)
- ANCH2130: Alexander the Great (1 lecture, 18 students)
- ANCH2301: Ancient Art and Archaeology (9 tutorials, 50 students)
- ANCH3570: Culture Identity and Power (3 classes, 20 students)

- ARCA1000: Discovering Archaeology (1 tutorial, 101 students)
- ARCA2150: Ancient Civilisations (4 practicals, 22 students)
- COMU3025: Cultures of Automation (1 tour, 29 students)
- LATN2120: Intermediate Latin (collection used in course content, 20 students)
- MUSM7002: Collections (1 tour and 2 practicals, 28 students)
- UQ College: Humanities Foundation Year (1 tutorial, 99 students)
- WCIV2600: Icons of Western Art (1 seminar, 29 students)

## Engagement Events

The Museum's new Student Experiences Strategy informs our approaches to engaging with UQ student audiences outside of the classroom. This could be through social or academic skills events, professional internships, volunteering, or employment opportunities.

The Museum's student-focused events were supported by a grant from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Cohort Connections scheme. In first semester, 44 students gathered in fancy dress at the Museum to mark the *Pyanopsia*, the Athenian festival for Apollo. Attendees enjoyed a talk on the *Pyanopsia* presented by postgraduate researcher and resident expert Oskar Fletcher. Later in the semester, the Museum ran an interdisciplinary academic skills masterclass unique to our regular programs. Led by Dr Janette McWilliam and drawing on major exhibition *Wondrous Machines*, students reconstructed the movement mechanisms of Hero's *automaton* with 3D printed parts supplied by UQ's School of ITEE and household items.

**"I only wish there were more! It was so much fun!"**

- 1st year undergraduate, Ancient Games Night review

In second semester, a further 34 students participated in our *Ancient Games Night*. Attendees competed in multi-player games *Tali* (knucklebones) and *lactus* (dice) facilitated by Museum staff and enjoyed a range of ancient board games and catering at leisure with their peers. Later in the semester, 12 students attended the academic skills masterclass exploring Roman Republican coinage with Dr Kit Morrell and Brianna Sands. Students discovered how to handle and identify Roman coins, navigate coinage catalogues and databases, and use coins as evidence.

**"It was genuinely excellent."**

- 3rd year undergraduate, Masterclass review

Museum staff also participated in other engagement activities:

- Mr James Donaldson co-organised a Museums panel for the 2023 Mediterranean Archaeology Australian Research Community (MAARC) conference with Dr Alina Kozlovski from UNE.
- Dr Amelia Brown attended the Brisbane Paniyiri Greek Festival with replica artefacts from the Museum and gave several talks.
- Dr Amelia Brown convened *Byzantium: Empire of the Sea*, the 21st Conference & Biennial General Meeting of the Australasian Association for Byzantine Studies, and opened the eponymously titled exhibition during the conference welcome registration.



**"I had the privilege of volunteering at the RD Milns Antiquities Museum in 2023, and it was absolutely one of the highlights of my time at UQ...It was a wonderful environment in which to broaden my knowledge and develop new skills."**

- 2023 Student Volunteer

## Professional Opportunities

The Museum's Student Experience program provides professional opportunities to current UQ students seeking to gain experience in the museum sector alongside their formal studies.

Four volunteers contributed over 320 hours to the Museum's stocktake and collections care activities.

Two new Curatorial Assistants (exhibitions and database) and the Collections Assistant completed 312 paid hours in support of the Museum's collection, database, and curatorial projects. A new Events Assistant, commencing in semester two, completed 52 hours of paid work and supported the Museum's student-focused events and associated reporting. All positions were held by advanced UQ students and funded by philanthropic donations.

The Museum also supported an Internship placement for a UQ Master of Museum Studies student to gain industry experience in a workplace setting, and a Winter Research Scholar who completed a 4-week independent research project, *Back to the Future: Implementing Best Practice in Collection Documentation at the RD Milns Antiquities Museum*.

These professional experiences provide students with hands-on work experience to aid them in securing ongoing employment following graduation.

## Exhibitions

In 2023, the Museum had a significant focus on exhibition and curatorial work and launched three new exhibitions throughout the year.

In June, the Museum launched *Greece, Rome, Byzantium: Empires of the Sea*, a guest exhibit curated by Dr Amelia Brown and Dr Adam Brennan and supported by the Greek Orthodox Community of St George, the Australasian Association for Byzantine Studies, and the School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, UQ. The exhibit coincided with the 21st Conference & Biennial General Meeting of the Australasian Association for Byzantine Studies, convened by Amelia Brown, and explores Mediterranean maritime history, religion, art and archaeology with a particular focus on naval and mercantile competition in Greece, Rome, and Byzantium.

*Intaglios: Imprints of Identity* replaced the *FAKE! Fake, Forged and Replica Coins* display in October. With curation by Brianna Sands, Assistant Curator, and Josephine Carroll-Walden, UQ PhD student, the exhibit explores the importance of personal identity and identity protection in the ancient world through an assemblage of intaglios and seals. The exhibition opened with a presentation by Josephine Carroll-Walden for the UQ Classics and Ancient History Seminar Series and reception.

The last exhibit, *The Honesty of Ancient Lamps*, was curated by student volunteer Matilda Martin, and presents an inspired look at the manufacture, makers, and production of ancient lamps.

## The Museum Team

### Office Staff

Dr Amelia Brown	Director
Mr James Donaldson	Manager/Curator
Ms Brianna Sands	Assistant Curator
Mr Oskar Fletcher	Engagement Officer

### Student Experience Positions

Ms Charlotte Lethbridge	Collections Assistant
Ms Isabella Zust-Sullivan	Curatorial Assistant (Database)
Ms Josephine Carroll-Walden	Curatorial Assistant (Exhibitions)
Ms Kyla Duffy	Events Assistant (commencing Semester 2, 2023)

### Tourguides

Ms Tyla Cascaes	Ms Josephine Carroll-Walden
Mr Oskar Fletcher	Ms Paige Maunder
Mr Rory Ardill-Walker	Ms Olivia Johnson
Ms Kyla Duffy	Mr Rory McLennan

### Volunteers

Mr Michael Bull	Mr Marc Hunter
Ms Matilda Martin	Ms Molly Hester

## Give to the Museum

Since 1963, the Museum has provided UQ students with the opportunity to have hands-on experiences with real ancient artefacts.

Today, with a renewed focus on training job-ready Humanities graduates with transferable skills and real-world experience, the Museum is perfectly placed to offer UQ students engaging and career-defining experiences. The Museum's current fundraising priorities are in support of these essential experiences for students.

Join our community of visionary donors, give now:

<https://www.uq.edu.au/giving/donations/fund/991075>

We would like to recognise and thank our donors for their generous contributions in 2023.

For further details contact

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