

The Penn Museum as an Excavating Body

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Nippur

A photo of the excavation of Nippur (1893), taken by John Henry Haynes.



Pezzati, Alessandro "Nippur and Hamdi Bey" *Expedition Magazine* 54.3 (2012): n. pag. *Expedition Magazine*. Penn Museum, 2012 Web. 22 Apr 2020
<<http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/?p=10628>>

- Early History of the Penn Museum
 - Founder of the Museum was William Pepper
 - Served as the University of Pennsylvania Provost from 1881 to 1894 and President of the Board of Managers of the Museum from 1894 to 1898.
 - He was approached in 1887 by Rev. John Punnett Peters, Professor of Semitics at the University of Pennsylvania to send an expedition in Mesopotamia
 - Eventually the Babylonian Exploration Fund assures the funding for an expedition to Nippur and the first expedition occurs in 1889.
 - The University of Pennsylvania was the first American institute to do archeological excavations in the region.

The Penn Museum

- View of the “Free Museum of Science and Art”



“Our Museum.” *Penn Museum*, <https://www.penn.museum/about/our-story>.

- The Board of Trustees wanted to reserve space for the incoming objects from the Nippur excavations.
- Land located between 34th Street and the Schuylkill River was donated by the city in 1894, so that the University would be able to highlight the collections from Nippur
- In 1899 the Museum opened under the name of the “Free Museum of Science and Art” and was one of the first fully electric public buildings in Philadelphia
- Excavating practices at the Museum involved thorough fieldwork. This early work means that a sizeable amount of the current collections which were sourced by the institution have a traceable excavation history.

Ur

- British and American excavations at Ur (1922)



327. The pit finished after six weeks' work.
49104-5414589

Pezzati, Alessandro, et al. "A Brief History of the Penn Museum." *Expedition*, vol. 54, no. 3, 2012, https://www.penn.museum/documents/publications/expedition/PDFs/54-3/A_Brief_History.pdf.

- The excavations at Ur were famous during the early 20th century, having produced objects from the sites such as the "Royal Tombs of Ur". The expedition was directed by C. Leonard Woolley from 1922 and 1934. This expedition provides a good example of the Penn Museum collaborating with local institutions at excavation sites. The British Museum and Penn Museum were each given about 25 percent of the objects excavated at Ur, while the Baghdad Museum was given the other 50 percent.

Beth Shean



Lamp, Early Iron Age



Lamp, Roman Period

- Excavation from the site of Beth Shean provided objects from a very expansive time period. A great example of the change over time apparent during the excavations at Beth Shean is by looking at lamps.
- Same function, although the decorative aspects of the lamp change during the Roman due to cross-cultural influences
- For information regarding the history of excavation at the site of Beth Shean, check out fellow intern Alex Stern's presentation. Also make sure to check out fellow intern Mira Yuan's presentation for information regarding our internship experience.

"Lamp," n.d. <https://www.penn.museum/collections/object/282791>.

"Lamp," n.d. <https://www.penn.museum/collections/object/239028>.

The Pennsylvania Declaration

- Froelich G. Rainey, Penn Museum Director and Presenter of the “Pennsylvania Declaration” at the 1970 UNESCO Convention



- At the 1970 UNESCO Convention, the Penn Museum presented the “Pennsylvania Declaration”, which stated that it would not follow any type of acquisition practices that would either lead to direct or indirect looting of ancient sites. This meant that an object had to have a collection history in order to be donated to the museum.
- Set the standard for other museums to follow.

Bibliography

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- "Nippur, Iraq." *Penn Museum*, <https://www.penn.museum/collections/highlights/babylonian/location/nippur.php>.
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