



Penn Museum's Youngest Egyptologist

ALEXANDER
WEGNER

BY JENNIFER
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FANS OF ELIZABETH PETERS' *Amelia Peabody* novels, which are set in late-19th century Egypt, might be familiar with a husband and wife team of archaeologists who excavate and solve murders with the help of their adventurous and precocious son, Ramses. The Penn Museum's Egyptian Section also has a husband and wife team of Egyptologists, Jen and Joe Wegner, who

carry out fieldwork together with their young son, Alexander. Unlike the Peabodys, however, the Wegners have not (yet) had a chance to solve any murders.

Alexander Wegner, who turned five this past summer during excavations at Abydos, is a veteran of archaeological fieldwork with this most recent trip marking his fourth visit to Egypt. Alexander first traveled to Egypt when he was eight months old, and spent almost three months at Abydos where his father was beginning excavations in the area of the massive underground tomb of Senwosret III (see *Expedition* 48(2):15-22).

Immediately following his Abydos season, Alexander traveled to Saqqara for a month-long project led by the Penn Museum's David Silverman. Highlights of that trip to Egypt included having his diaper changed in the forecourt of the pyramid of King Teti.

Alexander made a return trip to Abydos when he was two-and-a-half years old. He visited the excavations often but most of his time was spent at the dig house where he assisted his mother with drawing and recording the pottery and seal impressions.



From top to bottom: Alexander made his first appearance on the Abydos excavation team in 2004. His favorite activity involved working with pottery in the sherd pile. In 2005, Alexander joined his Dad as a seasoned veteran of the Abydos excavations.



Left, Alexander's daily work was done mostly with Mom in the sherd yard. Above, by 2007, Alexander was ready to help out with epigraphy at Saqqara. Below, in 2008, Alexander was old enough to enter the tomb of Senwosret III, where he was able to pose with Mom in Senwosret III's burial chamber.

In the winter of 2007, Alexander returned to Saqqara where he began to practice epigraphy and learn excavation techniques.

Most recently, he spent May and June of 2008 at Abydos, where summer temperatures soared to over 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Despite the heat, he enjoyed visiting the tomb of Senwosret III and was able to go as far underground as the king's burial chamber. He was, however, disappointed to see that the king's mummy was not in its sarcophagus.

Like many kids, Alexander enjoys digging in a sandbox. In Egypt, he gets a chance to play in one of the world's greatest sandboxes. Of all the things he has found, Alexander seems to like bones the best. So far, he has not found any dinosaur bones, but he keeps looking!

Even seasoned archaeologists, however, can experience excavation burn-out. At the end of this summer's season, Alexander issued the ultimatum to his parents that he "wasn't going back to Egypt again until he was seven!" 🏠

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