



A Research Institution

The Penn Museum’s 2013–2020 Strategic Plan includes four foundational pillars: research, teaching, collections stewardship, and public engagement. In addition to our regular features, the Winter issue of *Expedition* offers a selection of articles and departmental columns that illustrate recent work in each of these foundational areas, with research as the underlying common thread.

Deputy Director Steve Tinney gives us an overview of the new CAAM labs and teaching facilities, a place where student research is already underway. “Around the World” highlights ten different Penn Museum-affiliated offsite research projects—five from the perspective of our curators and consulting scholars who lead them, and five from the perspective of undergraduate and graduate students who had the opportunity to participate as team members and gain invaluable hands-on experience. “Conserving the Past,” a new occasional column, demonstrates the importance of investigative studies used to evaluate artifacts before conservation.

Our cover story focuses on the upcoming exhibition *Beneath the Surface: Life, Death, and Gold in Ancient Panama*. This research project began as an excavation conducted by J. Alden Mason in 1940, which resulted in a greater knowledge of the Coclé culture and the addition of many remarkable objects to the Museum collection. Lucy Fowler Williams recounts the history of the excavation, followed by a behind-the-scenes interview with Exhibition Curator, Clark Erickson, and Director of Exhibitions and Public Programs, Kate Quinn.

Michael Danti writes next about his current project in Iraqi Kurdistan, as he searches for the ancient kingdom of Musasir, referenced in contemporary Assyrian texts. Brian Rose and artist Marianne Lovink investigate the techniques that might have been used in creating Roman wax masks and work with students to create actual masks.

Our last article on the Forty Saints church in Albania, while not a Penn Museum excavation, was a project that Richard Hodges and John Mitchell worked on when Dr. Hodges was Director of the Museum. Here, the changing architecture of this important pilgrimage site is revealed.

This issue includes many other short features on topics such as upcoming events, a new exhibition in the Archives hallway, recent acquisitions, and news of interest to Museum members. Thank you for your continued support of the Penn Museum! ●

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PRINTING

The Pearl Group at CRW Graphics

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Expedition® (ISSN 0014-4738) is published three times a year by the Penn Museum. Editorial inquiries should be addressed to the Editor at jhickman@upenn.edu. Please send advertising queries to Teri Scott at teris@upenn.edu. Unless otherwise noted, all images are courtesy of the Penn Museum.