

A Fifty-Year History of Research

In December, I had the chance to visit the Museum’s research site at Abydos during a trip to Egypt with a group of our most loyal friends. While there, we were all enormously lucky to receive a tour from Joe and Jen Wegner, Curators in the Museum’s Egyptian Section, who helped us understand the full depth of the more than 50-year history of rich work at the site. Our work at Abydos has not only yielded important insights into Egyptian kingship and religion, it has also been a proving ground for generations of Egyptologists who have gone on to become leaders in the field. Much of this is due to the tireless efforts of the much-missed David O’Connor, to whom this issue is dedicated. The pages you are about to read contain numerous tributes by leading Egyptian scholars to Dr. O’Connor’s incredible intellectual curiosity and capacity for mentorship, as well as examples of how his life’s work continues to influence the Museum’s research and exhibitions. Our work at Abydos remains central to the Museum’s mission—as is attested by its leading role in the ongoing transformative renovations of our Ancient Egypt and Nubia Galleries, which broke ground last fall.



Christopher Woods with Jennifer Houser Wegner and Joe Wegner in the tomb of Woseribre-Senebkay in December 2023.

Of course, Abydos is only one part of the Museum’s vast research network, and *Expedition* readers are the first to hear about our new discoveries. In an upcoming issue, we’ll hear from Dr. Simon Martin, Curator of the Mexico and Central Mexico Gallery, about his latest research on the Classic Maya Collapse. Based on a series of inscriptions, including one in our own gallery, he’ll be pointing to new clues about this much debated mystery—one of the most significant in world archaeology.

Here in the Director’s office, I feel enormously privileged to be surrounded by scholars working at the leading edge of their fields, producing work with lasting relevance to the human story. One of these scholars is Joe Wegner, guest editor of this issue, and your marvelous guide through the many wonders of this ancient site, just as he was during my recent visit to Egypt. I know that your investigations into Abydos will be just as rewarding as mine.

Warm regards,

CHRISTOPHER WOODS, PH.D.,
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