

Although the remains of their hasty excavations often hinder modern investigations, archaeologists today feel a sense of collaboration with our predecessors. Whereas these early excavators provide us with the basis for our own studies, our ongoing research continues to add information to advance our knowledge about the past. 🏠

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Kei Yamamoto in Currelly's hut.

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# David Randall-MacIver *Explorer of Abydos and Curator of the Egyptian Section*

BY JENNIFER HOUSER WEGNER

AS A YOUNG man of 26, the British-born archaeologist and anthropologist David Randall-MacIver began his career working at Abydos as part of the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF) expedition headed by Sir Flinders Petrie. In 1899–1900 Randall-MacIver discovered and investigated the mortuary temple of Senwosret III. To him goes the credit for initially identifying its royal owner. With Arthur Weigall and Charles Currelly, Randall-MacIver defined the basic elements of the complex of Senwosret III, providing the foundation for the Penn Museum's current excavations at South Abydos.

The Museum's association with Egypt began in 1890, when the redoubtable Sara Yorke Stevenson was appointed the first head of the Egyptian Section. During her tenure the Museum contributed to the fieldwork of the EEF and received important materials from their excavations between 1890 and 1907. As involved as Stevenson was with acquiring Egyptian material, however, she was unable to inaugurate the Museum's own excavations in Egypt.

This honor rather goes to David Randall-MacIver. Through his scientific training and association with Petrie, and his formidable energy and ambition, Randall-MacIver was appointed the Museum's first professional Egyptological Curator when Stevenson resigned in 1905. Funded by Eckley B. Coxe, Jr., the Museum's own fieldwork in Egypt began in 1906–1907 under Randall-MacIver's direction, quickly establishing the



David Randall-MacIver in 1910 at Buhen, Lower Nubia.

Museum's reputation as a major research institution in the field of Egyptian archaeology.

His work at this time focused on Lower Nubia which extended along the Nile south of Aswan to the Second Cataract. Ancient Egypt and Nubia had ongoing, close contact in the form of trade, conquest, and colonization throughout their long history. Randall-MacIver carried out several important field seasons, at the sites of Areika, Karanog, and Buhen, in Nubia (1907–10) with the Museum's Assistant Curator, Leonard Woolley. At the time Nubia had been virtually untouched by archaeology, and their work led to the discovery of rich cultural remains that spanned over three millennia, from 3100 BCE well into the Roman and Byzantine periods.

Randall-MacIver's tireless fieldwork was not limited to Egypt and Nubia. In southern Africa he conducted excavations in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) at Great Zimbabwe, and from 1905–1906 at the sites of Khami and Inyanga. In *Mediaeval*

*Rhodesia* he contended that the ruins in Zimbabwe were not built by an ancient Arab or European civilization as was believed at that time. Instead, they were of purely African origin, dating from about the 14th century CE. This view was borne out by later archaeological study.

After six years at the Museum, Randall-MacIver resigned in 1911 after an argument with George Byron Gordon, the Museum's Director (1910–27). He then served as librarian of the American Geographical Society until 1914. His desire for daring adventure continued as he worked as an intelligence officer during World War I. In 1921, he moved to Rome to focus on Italian archaeology, particularly the study of the Etruscans. During World War II, he assisted the U.S. Department of War in its efforts to protect Italian monuments from destruction. David Randall-MacIver died in 1947 at the age of 74. 🏠

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