The 1839 invention of photography was revolutionary, and instantly useful to archaeologists, changing the nature of documenting the past. Yet reproducing color in photographs remained a technological and costly challenge, and before color photography was developed by Kodak in the 1930s, the Penn Museum hired artists to draw materials for publication and exhibition. *Year of Color: Art in the Archives* renews our appreciation for color illustrations, lithographs, early black and white photography, and monochromatic images retouched in color.

The Museum Archives hosts this special exhibition that explores the concept and value of color imagery, the spectrum of techniques used, and the artistry of Museum illustrators to convey the textures, dimensions, and inscriptions of objects in the Museum’s collection. Among the more than 40 images on display are detailed watercolor paintings of Maya pottery and the Sumerian bull-headed lyre by M. Louise Baker, Museum Artist from 1908 to 1936. Also featured are a stunning portrait of Slow Bull by Edward S. Curtis, an illustrated translation of the famous Rosetta Stone published by the University of Pennsylvania’s Philomathean Society in 1856, and a color lithograph of Czar Nicholas II of Russia, a souvenir of his coronation in 1896.

—Alessandro Pezzati, Senior Archivist

**LEFT:** Ceramic goblet with leopard motif excavated at Tepe Hissar, Iran. Watercolor by Ivan Gerasimoff, 1932. This painting stands out for its background of brilliant color. Most archaeological illustrators, in contrast, ignore the background. UPM image #169927. **RIGHT:** Two Japanese women. Hand-colored albumen print, ca. 1870s–1880s. Photograph by Felice Beato or Reteniz von Stillfried. Furness, Harrison, Hiller Collection. Throughout the late 1800s, various methods were used to create color photographs from black-and-white images. A number of studios employed artists to paint them. This was especially popular in Japan. UPM image #152499.
EXPEDITION Winter 2014

EDITOR’S NOTE: Alex Pezzati, Senior Archivist, and Joani Etskovitz, Summer Intern, co-curated this exhibition, on view in the Penn Humanities Forum and Penn Museum Archives corridor, 2nd floor, through May 31, 2015.

Translation of the Rosetta Stone inscription by the Philomathean Society, University of Pennsylvania. Book with color lithographs. In 1856, three undergraduates from Penn’s literary society undertook to translate, illustrate, and publish the translation of all three portions of the famous Rosetta Stone (the Egyptian hieroglyphics had been deciphered by Jean-François Champollion in 1822). Every page is uniquely illustrated and handwritten. UPM image #238718.


M. LOUISE BAKER (1872–1962, pictured ca. 1930), the talent behind a number of the paintings in the exhibition, was Museum Artist for almost 30 years. She began working for George Byron Gordon, then Assistant Curator of General Ethnology and later Museum Director, who commissioned her to create color depictions of the most beautiful specimens of Maya pottery for a portfolio published by the Penn Museum. Her drawings and paintings are so vivid and realistic, they tempt the viewer to pull the artifact from the page.