Alfred Bendiner (1899–1964) was a Philadelphia architect and artist best known for his caricatures, which for many years appeared weekly in Philadelphia newspapers. To Bendiner, drawing was as natural as breathing, and he did it everywhere, on any scrap of paper. He was at home with any subject, always joyful and irreverent, finding constant delight in the world around him. Bendiner worked on two Penn Museum archaeological projects (Tepe Gawra, Iraq, 1936–1937; and Tikal, Guatemala, 1960) and produced many of his inimitable drawings while in the field. The illustrations you see here were created in Tepe Gawra.

The Bendiner Collection at the Penn Museum was a gift of Elizabeth Sutro Bendiner, comprising approximately 300 works, including caricatures and archaeological drawings from Museum excavations, as well as from many of their travels. Bendiner’s work is also found in other libraries and museums, including the National Portrait Gallery, the Library of Congress, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

—Alessandro Pezzati, Senior Archivist

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Details from “The Vase” by Alfred Bendiner, 1936–1937. Pen and ink on paper, 11.5 x 14.25 inches. Gift of Mrs. Alfred Bendiner. PM object 70-31-37. The individuals seen here were actual members of the expedition. The man with the pith helmet is Ephraim Avigdor Speiser, director of the expedition; the man in the lab coat is John Tobler.