



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Re-assembling and re-telling Kish: new approaches to research and display in the Ashmolean Museum

HIGHCOCK N. 1*

¹ Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, United Kingdom

*Corresponding author

Abstract

From 1923 to 1933, the Field Museum and the University of Oxford jointly excavated the site of Kish, located in the Euphrates River flood plain 80 km south of Baghdad. The finds were divided between Chicago, Oxford, and Baghdad where they constituted one of the founding collections of the Iraq Museum. The final site report was never published, although sustained research over the last 45 years and more recent digitization and publication projects have done much to fill in the gaps and reunite the three collections. By directly addressing the challenges presented by the initial excavations through archival material, popular reception, and highlighting lesser known objects, this paper will present new avenues for display of the Kish material at the Ashmolean Museum. In addition, considering Islamic-period objects from Kish in the Ashmolean allows us to re-think how we approach chronology and site histories in museums with traditional departmental and gallery divisions between pre-Islamic and Islamic West Asia. Kish can tell many different human-focused stories, generated by current research, to engage visitors and introduce them to a notable early city that most have never heard of.

Keywords

Mesopotamia, museum, display, reception, Iraq

Session

3. Heritage and archaeology

Workshop

A16374GR - Digging through the Stores: Challenges and Prospects of New Research on Old Collections

Type of paper

Oral presentation