

Items from ancient Sumerian city found in cupboard

June 25 2014, by Danica Kirka



In this undated photo provided by Dr Tamar Hodos via University of Bristol, the box in which materials from Sir Leonard Woolley's archaeological dig of the Sumerian city of Ur were found, in Bristol, England . Researchers at Bristol University discovered the box on top of a cupboard. They determined that the 4,500-year-old contents _ consisting of pottery, seeds, food and animal bones _ had come from a tomb in an excavation jointly sponsored during the 1920s and 1930s by the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Senior lecturer Tamar Hodos said Wednesday, June 25, 2014, it's somewhat like finding a Monet in the attic. (AP Photo/ University of Bristol)

Amazing what you can find when you do a good clean out.

Bristol University in Britain learned this firsthand when researchers discovered a box containing materials from archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley's dig of the Sumerian city of Ur tucked away on top of a cupboard.

"I would classify it in the same category as 'I found a Monet in my grandmothers' attic,' " Tamar Hodos, a senior lecturer in archaeology, said Wednesday.

Researchers determined that the box's contents were 4,500 years old—consisting of pottery, seeds, carbonized apple rings and animal bones—and had come from a tomb at an excavation in Iraq that was jointly sponsored during the 1920s and 1930s by the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

The materials had been analyzed and described in earlier journals. But researchers are still thrilled because archaeologists at the time did not always collect such organic items.

Index cards inside the crate scrupulously catalog where the materials were found, together with identification numbers unique to the dig. The material has been given to the British Museum, which is assessing it.

"There's no question that this material is from the Woolley dig," Hodos said.



In this undated photo provided by Dr Tamar Hodos via University of Bristol, the materials discovered in a box from Sir Leonard Woolley's archaeological dig of the Sumerian city of Ur on display, in Bristol, England . Researchers at Bristol University discovered the box on top of a cupboard. They determined that the 4,500-year-old contents _ consisting of pottery, seeds, food and animal bones _ had come from a tomb in an excavation jointly sponsored during the 1920s and 1930s by the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Senior lecturer Tamar Hodos said Wednesday, June 25, 2014, it's somewhat like finding a Monet in the attic. (AP Photo/ University of Bristol)

But no one knows how the material got to Bristol, which had no connection to the dig. The university is hoping for someone to step forward to help solve the mystery.

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