



Communications

T 773.834.9777

ISAC-communications@uchicago.edu

Contacts

Susanne Paulus, Curator

paulus@uchicago.edu

Matthew Welton, Communications

mwelton@uchicago.edu

Exhibition Dates:

September 21, 2023 – March 24, 2024

Exhibition Location:

ISAC Museum
1155 E. 58th St.
Chicago, IL 60637

Press/Members preview:

September 20, 2023
5:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Exhibition Webpage:

isac.uchicago.edu/backtoschool

ISAC

The University of Chicago
1155 E. 58th St.
Chicago, IL 60637

isac.uchicago.edu

For Immediate Release

The Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures Museum (ISAC Museum) on the campus of the University of Chicago opens a new special exhibition that examines Babylonian education and culture, as well as objects that reflect school life in ancient Nippur

In 1740 BCE in Babylonia, students from across the neighborhood gathered in a modest house in Nippur, a Mesopotamian city in present-day southern Iraq, to learn how to read and write the complex cuneiform script, while more advanced students studied topics like mathematics, religion, and law. The goal of their education was to gain the knowledge, skills, and character traits necessary to become successful scribes working for the king, temples, and local authorities. In 1951–1952, the Joint Expedition to Nippur of the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (ISAC) at the University of Chicago and the University of Philadelphia Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology discovered the remains of this school. In 2023, ISAC invites visitors to follow the journey of these ancient students in Nippur by entering the Edubba’*a*, a scribal school, during the special exhibition: *Back to School in Babylonia*.

This special exhibition is curated by Susanne Paulus, with Marta Díaz Herrera, Jane Gordon, Danielle Levy, Madeline Ouimet, Colton G. Siegmund, and Ryan D. Winters and with support from Pallas Eible Hargro, C Mikhail, Carter Rote, and Sarah Ware.

It reunites objects excavated at Nippur now held in the ISAC Tablet Collection, the ISAC Museum, and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Tablets in the Iraq Museum, Baghdad, will be represented by plaster casts.

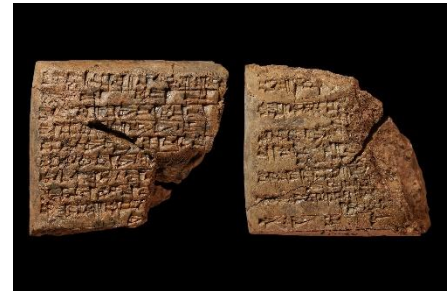
This free special exhibition runs from September 21, 2023, through March 24, 2024, at the ISAC Museum.

The Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures Museum
The University of Chicago
Back to School in Babylonia

Tablet inscribed with a Babylonian exercise sheet
Old Babylonian Period
Iraq, Nippur
ISACM A30276
Photo by Danielle Levy



Tablet inscribed with a story
about Babylonian student life
Old Babylonian Period
Iraq, Nippur
ISACM A30217
Photo by Danielle Levy



Tablet with the bite marks of a bored student
Old Babylonian Period
Iraq, Nippur
Penn Museum, N5326B
Photo courtesy of the Penn Museum and CDLI



Clay lion plaque used as a wall
decoration in the school
Old Babylonian Period
Iraq, Nippur
Penn Museum UM 53-11-05 (3N-340)
Photo courtesy of the Penn Museum

