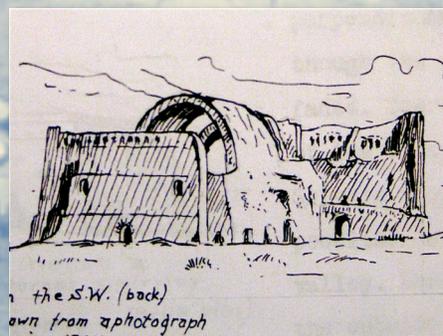
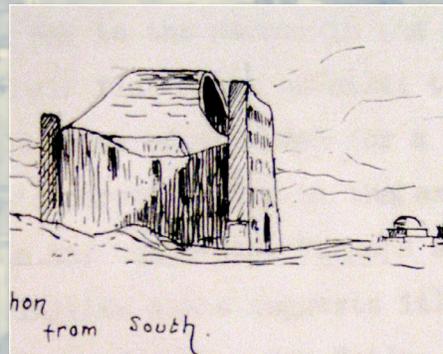


To Go Before:

Placing the Travelogues and Sketches of Joseph Meyer in their 19th Century Context

The 1894 season that Joseph Meyer spent making archaeological sketches at Nippur was the most productive and best documented season out of the Penn Museum's first expedition there. His drawings of the sites there drew praise from the Babylon Expedition Fund, injecting much needed positive reinforcement into the field team, most especially for the man who had brought him there: John Henry Haynes. For Haynes, it was a much-needed break from the stress of running a dig at a treacherous site; for Meyer, it was the tail-end of a world tour sponsored by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to practice his architectural drawing. His are the only architectural drawings that record the architecture of Nippur, and for him this was the last stop as he succumbed to fatal illness in Baghdad just before Christmas of 1895.



Views of the Palace of Chosroes.
Joseph Meyer. Personal journals

Traveling throughout Europe and India, Meyer was privy to the circles of 19th century Western ambassadors and residents that welcomed such scholars into their homes abroad. Early drawings by British travelers like James Silk Buckingham and Claudius James Rich of the volatile Arabian Peninsula in the 1810s and 1820s were used more as surveys of the unfamiliar territory than as pure archaeological or architectural studies. Relatively unexamined since the early 19th century, Baghdad had grown extensively under the late Ottomans as a gateway to the India trade, and Meyer's journals and sketches give the reader a detailed picture of a vibrant and healthy city. More significantly they depict key monuments of architecture, such as the Sasanian palace of Ctesiphon in their proper setting and context.