

Harold L. Dibble, Anthropology

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Harold Lewis Dibble, archeologist and the Francis E. Johnston Endowed Term Professor of Anthropology (Almanac September 5, 2017), died on June 10 from complications due to cancer. He was 66.

Dr. Dibble earned his undergraduate degree in 1971 and his PhD in 1981, both from the University of Arizona. He worked at the Arizona State Museum before coming to Penn as a lecturer in 1982. In 1985, he was hired as an assistant professor in the anthropology department, later becoming an associate professor in 1990 and a full professor in 1995. He studied the origins and evolution of human culture and cognition in the Near East, North Africa and Western Europe during the Paleolithic era.

Harold Dibble

He was among the first to use a total station (combining a theodolite, an electronic distance measuring device and computer software) for accurate 3-D spatial recording of site topography, archaeological layers and artifacts. Dr. Dibble (collaborating with Shannon McPherron) also wrote the software for an early version of GIS (Geographic Information Systems), a program allowing data to be viewed on a computer as individual layers that can then be superimposed with other layers, providing visualization of, for instance, artifact distribution or the stratigraphy of a site.

In June 2011, *National Geographic* channel's "World's Oldest Child" focused on his team's discovery of a child's skull and parts of the skeleton in Smuggler's Cave (Grotte des Contrebandiers) dated to 108,000 years ago.

Dr. Dibble served as the curator-in-charge of European archaeology section at the Penn Museum and as the deputy director for curatorial affairs. He directed Paleolithic excavations at Pech de l'Azé IV and La Ferrassie, both in France, and was the director of the Laboratory for the Study of Ancient Technology at Penn. Dr. Dibble chaired the Penn Museum Laboratory Committee and the Penn Arts and Sciences Committee on Undergraduate Academic Standing and served as a member of the SAS Personnel Committee.

Dr. Dibble was a recipient of the Society for American Archaeology's 2014 Award for Excellence in Archaeological Analysis and was a 2015 Fellow of the Center for Archaeological Science, University of Wollongong, Australia.

He co-authored numerous books, including *Using Computers in Archaeology: A Practical Guide*, *The Middle Paleolithic Site of Pech de l'Azé IV*, *Préhistoire de la Région de Rabat-Témara*, *The Cave of Fontéchevade and Handbook of Paleolithic Typology*.

He is survived by his wife, Lee; two sons, Chip (Lauren Shandelman) and Flint (Jonida Martini); and a sister, Christine Burke. The family plans to hold a celebration of Dr. Dibble's life at the Penn Museum sometime in the fall with details to be announced at a later date.

Memorial donations can be made to Penn's anthropology department at <https://giving.apps.upenn.edu/fund?program=SAS&fund=630074> (<https://giving.apps.upenn.edu/fund?program=SAS&fund=630074>) The donations will be used to help students and colleagues attend Paleoanthropology Society meetings and for student archaeological research at the University of Pennsylvania.