

From the Director

THE MUSEUM IN A "FLAT" WORLD

THE FINANCIAL CRISES across the globe during the past year have underlined what a small world we live in. Indeed, it is a "flat" one, as Thomas L. Friedman has recently described in *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (2005). All parts of the globe are interconnected in ways


unimaginable even a generation ago. For Penn Museum, which began by assembling renowned collections from all over the world via archaeological and ethnographic expeditions to many countries, a flat world has to be a huge advantage.

Penn Museum belongs to a small club of similar museums, whose peerless assets reflect and teach us about the intercession of great civilizations and cultures. Our challenge, of course, is to make these assets accessible so that generations that have been raised on internet-based social networking tools are ineluctably drawn to us. Meeting this challenge will be as great as adding a new building to the Museum. It involves imagining virtual worlds, and, above all, appreciating and reaching audiences whose attitudes have been defined by new ways of communicating.

In a great university like Penn this should not disarm us! The Wharton School and, to some extent, Penn's School of Medicine have been facing this new challenge with great success, reinventing themselves every generation. But in the social sciences we have had less experience in meeting this new age, notwithstanding the fact that many of our students and colleagues worldwide are becoming increasingly engaged in the fast-expanding cultural heritage industry. This is one good reason (among many) why the Museum needs to engage actively with the University and project itself appropriately as Penn's "Window on the World"—a window on this newly flat world. Such an approach necessarily means the Museum must reorganize itself to meet the needs of a bolder,

globalized future. Working with the many parts of the University, including the new centers that represent educational and intellectual activity in all parts of world, is fundamental.

To lead this new role the Museum has appointed a new Deputy Director—C. Brian Rose—the James B. Pritchard Professor of Classical Archaeology and Curator-in-Charge of the Museum's Mediterranean Section. Featured recently here in the pages of *Expedition* (vol. 49(3):4-5), Brian Rose has already established himself as an energetic teacher and scholar, celebrated for both his research on Roman art as well as his excavations at the famous site of Troy in northwest Turkey. He is also a seasoned administrator, having championed the revival of Penn's interdisciplinary program in the Art and Archaeology of the Mediterranean World, while simultaneously providing powerful leadership within the wider discipline of archaeology by serving as the President of the American Institute of Archaeology (AIA).

Brian Rose's appointment as the Museum's Deputy Director marks the first step of many intended to address the challenges and opportunities of this new age. If we approach this era with boldness, Philadelphia, Penn Museum, and the University of Pennsylvania will become known to new generations worldwide in such great places as Abydos (Egypt), Ban Chiang (Thailand), Copán (Honduras), Gordion (Turkey), Hasanlu (Iran), and Tikal (Guatemala) through virtual portals that will provide access to our collections and the amazing research undertaken by the Museum over the 120-year history of its existence! 



RICHARD HODGES, PH.D.

The Williams Director

